

SC387671

Registered provider: Oldham Children's Social Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home. It is a short-break home for disabled children. It provides care for up to seven children who have a learning disability, a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment.

At the time of this inspection, two children were staying overnight in the home, and they spent time with the inspectors.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2024.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 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	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 5 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/02/2025	Full	Good
12/03/2024	Full	Good
23/01/2023	Full	Good
08/12/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff provide short-break stays for thirty-two children, offering a high level of individualised support and personalised care. Children enjoy positive experiences away from home, look forward to attending the service, and use their time there to learn new skills and build friendships.

Staff use strong, child-centred planning when introducing children to the home. They arrange several initial visits, giving parents the opportunity to share detailed knowledge about their child so staff can fully understand each child's needs. Visits are then extended gradually, at a pace that suits the child, progressing to overnight stays only when the child feels ready. This thoughtful approach helps reduce anxiety and builds the child's confidence.

Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of each child's needs. Staff are child centred, caring, nurturing and they speak with genuine enthusiasm about the children. Staff clearly recognise and celebrate each child's progress and achievements.

Staff have a strong understanding of each child's individual communication methods and consistently ensure that their views are heard. They confidently use tools such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), social stories and visual aids to support children in expressing their feelings, preferences and choices. Children are encouraged to select their meals and activities, ensuring that their views remain central to daily routines.

Staff create meaningful, enjoyable experiences that children look forward to during their stays. They make full use of resources within the home and the wider community to offer opportunities that may not otherwise be available without the short-break service. Staff actively promote each child's interests and introduce new experiences, such as creating a Santa's grotto, which contribute positively to children's emotional wellbeing.

Staff build and maintain positive relationships with parents through excellent communication. Parents are regularly involved in reviewing and contributing to their child's short-stay plan, supporting continuity of care. Staff also organise coffee mornings and open days, giving parents opportunities to share positive experiences alongside their child and the team.

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

Staff provide a high level of supervision and support in line with children's assessed needs, both within the home and in the community. They prioritise children's safety and embed safeguarding practice into everyday routines. Parents and professionals consistently report that children are safe during their stays.

Staff protect children from harm by following robust safeguarding procedures that they understand well. They work closely with parents and other professionals to meet children's complex needs. The manager maintains strong communication with families and partner agencies to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to each child's care.

Staff identify and manage risks effectively through detailed, informative risk assessments. These clearly outline each child's vulnerabilities and the specific actions required to keep them safe. The manager reviews these assessments regularly with parents, ensuring staff identify emerging risks promptly and put appropriate support systems in place.

Staff understand the behaviours children may display because of their individual needs. They respond with calm, caring and consistent strategies, quickly recognising when a child is unhappy or unsettled. Staff communicate effectively to reduce anxiety and address concerns. There has been one complaint, which was managed appropriately.

Staff manage medication safely and effectively. They complete appropriate training before administering any medication and consistently follow safe practices. This ensures that children continue to receive the medication they need during their short breaks.

Staff provide a spacious, welcoming and safe environment that meets children's needs. Children's artwork and photos are displayed throughout the home, creating a warm and child friendly atmosphere. Staff carefully plan bedroom furnishings and decorations to reflect each child's individual needs and preferences. They also provide age-appropriate toys, games, a sensory room and a garden, all of which children enjoy using.

The manager is trained in safer recruitment. However, recruitment checks for one member of staff were not sufficiently robust. The manager did not ensure that this staff member provided a complete employment history, meaning potential gaps were not explored.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a strong and effective management team in the home. The manager is supported by two highly capable deputy managers, and together they demonstrate dedication, inspiration and a clear child-centred approach. They maintain a detailed understanding of each child's individual needs and provide consistent leadership. Children are placed at the centre of all decision-making and practice.

The management team has clear oversight of the day-to-day running of the home. The manager recently completed a detailed quality-of-care review; however, feedback from staff, parents and other professionals was not included. This feedback is essential to fully evaluate the quality of the service and ensure children's experiences continue to improve.

The manager updates the homes statement of purpose. However, this has not been sent to Ofsted in the expected timescales. This prevents the regulator from maintaining full oversight of staffing changes and other key developments.

The staff team provides stable, consistent and high-quality care for children. They share the management team's child-centred values and aspirations, working collaboratively and promoting a strong team ethos. Staff report that they feel well supported and valued by the management team.

The manager implements a comprehensive training programme to ensure staff develop the skills and knowledge required for their roles. All staff complete mandatory training, and the manager arranges additional training prior to a child moving into the home to meet identified needs. However, not all staff have achieved their required qualifications within the expected timescales.

The manager provides regular and supportive supervision sessions for staff. These sessions allow staff to reflect on their practice, discuss challenges and identify further training or guidance to strengthen their professional development.

The management team holds frequent and well-attended team meetings. These meetings enable the staff to share good practice, discuss updates about children and cascade essential information to ensure there is consistency across the team.

The manager and staff build strong and effective working relationships with other professionals. They share information appropriately with parents, social workers and schools to promote consistency and meet children's holistic needs.

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 recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The registered person may only— employ an individual to work at the children's home. if the individual satisfies the requirements The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character. the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform. the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April	10 April 2026

2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (1) (2)(a) (3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that there is a full employment history of all staff who work in the home and any gaps in employment are scrutinised and evidence of this is recorded. In particular, the registered person must ensure that all staff that work in the home in a care role have obtained their relevant qualification by the relevant date.	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ("a quality-of-care review") at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children. any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(c) (5)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that when completing a quality-of-care review, children's, professionals, parents and staff feedback must be taken into consideration and evidenced in the report.	10 April 2026

The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1 The registered person must— keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b)) In particular, the registered person must ensure that the homes Statement of purpose is kept updated and copy sent to HMCI. This requirement is restated	10 April 2026
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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: SC387671

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Metropolitan House, Hobson Street, Oldham OL1 1HD

Responsible individual: Nicholas Whitbread

Registered manager: Jacqueline Attwater

Inspectors

Simon Jones, Social Care Inspector

Joy Viles, Social Care Inspector

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