

1247212

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a private provider. It provides care for up to four children who may experience social or emotional difficulties. Three children can live in the main part of the house and one child can live in the attached apartment.

The manager registered with Ofsted in July 2022.

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

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 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/01/2022	Full	Good
18/02/2020	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/09/2019	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/05/2019	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy living in the home. They say that they feel helped, supported, and listened to if they have any worries.

Children are cared for by staff who are committed to creating a warm, homely atmosphere where children can thrive. One staff member said, 'It is a home, not a workplace.' Another said, 'A typical day consists of laughter, love and the occasional bicker about who ate the last biscuit.'

The manager makes sure that children's moves in and out of the home are considered carefully. One child has now moved back to live with their family. Another child has recently moved in. The child's social worker said that the process was very child focused so that it was a positive experience.

Children are supported to attend school. Some children, who have previously not had good attendance, have taken GCSE exams. The staff have been proactive in supporting children to find employment if they do not wish to continue in education.

Children's views are sought on a regular basis and staff listen to what they say. They are welcome to attend staff meetings to discuss their own care planning and contribute to their plans. However, some language in documents, including the statement of purpose, is not always helpful to children and is sometimes outdated.

Children enjoy a range of activities of their choice. These include baking at home to more adventurous experiences, such as indoor skydiving. The staff are prepared to travel so that children can maintain familiar activities when they move to the home. Outdoor activities promote children's health and well-being. One child spoke about a recent hike to visit waterfalls and said, 'It was a mission, but worth it at the end!'

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

Children's risks and vulnerabilities are understood well. Good-quality risk management plans mean that staff know how to respond to children's needs. Clear boundaries and expectations mean that consequences are very rarely used, and children do not have to be held to ensure their safety or that of those around them.

The manager had raised that they can no longer provide care for one child due to the levels of concern about their safety. The manager engaged the child in understanding these concerns. This has reduced the risks to the child, and they have remained living at the home. This provides them with greater security and stability. The child is able to reflect on how their life has improved since their arrival so that they now feel safer.

If children go missing from the home, staff follow procedures to ensure their safe return. They request independent return home interviews and challenge local authorities if they do not arrange them.

The team is creative in its approach to risk management. This means that the risks to children's safety are reduced. The manager uses an individualised approach to track and monitor any concerns, for example in relation to children's emotional well-being.

The staff seek advice and guidance from external agencies to support children's health and well-being. Staff encourage children to learn about the risks of harm from substance misuse, which helps them to better understand how it can affect their health. This helps children to reduce misuse of illegal substances.

There are locks on internal doors to shared areas of the home, which makes it feel less homely. Although the manager provided assurance that these are not used, there is the potential for children to be prevented from accessing all areas of their home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new manager has registered with Ofsted since the last inspection. She has introduced a more nurturing approach to the team's practice. Staff universally praise the manager's level of support and speak about how this new approach makes a positive difference for children.

The team of staff are supported in their professional development through regular, reflective supervision. They have access to a range of training to enhance their practice and to meet children's individual needs. However, some members of staff have exceeded the time frame in which to achieve their qualification, and one member of staff is enrolled on a qualification that is not suitable for their care role.

There have been several changes in the staff team. The manager carries out exit interviews to understand why staff leave and prepares children for these changes. The manager takes responsibility for ensuring that new staff are suitable to work with children and that they receive a full induction to their role. However, the workforce plan needs updating to reflect changes in the team.

The manager has good monitoring systems in place. She has clear oversight of children's progress and how staff practice supports positive outcomes. She challenges and escalates when external partner agencies are not fulfilling their responsibilities for children's care.

External monitoring does not consistently include consultation with stakeholders to gain their valuable input about the quality of care provided. Children's bedrooms are not routinely checked as part of visits, and one report contained unnecessary sensitive information about 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
<p>The registered person may only—</p> <p>employ an individual to work at the children's home if the individual satisfies the requirements in paragraph (3).</p> <p>The requirements are that—</p> <p>the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform.</p> <p>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—</p> <p>the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or</p> <p>a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma.</p> <p>The relevant date is—</p> <p>in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home. (Regulation 32 (2)(a) (3)(b) (4)(a)(b) (5)(a))</p> <p>Specifically, all staff employed in a care role should complete the relevant qualification to that role within the specified time frame.</p>	30 April 2023
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p> <p>children can access all appropriate areas of the children's home's premises. (Regulation 21 (b))</p>	30 April 2023

In particular, there should not be locks on doors to shared areas of the home, to ensure that children can have access.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that language used in children's documents and the statement of purpose is helpful to children and is not outdated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the workforce plan is kept up to date. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the independent person's report includes all relevant activities to inform the assessment of the quality of care, including regular consultation with stakeholders and checking the suitability of children's bedrooms. The report should avoid inclusion of sensitive information about individual children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: 1247212

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Exceptional Care Limited

Registered provider address: Exceptional Care Limited, Malthouse Business Centre, Southport Road, Ormskirk L39 1QR

Responsible individual: Susan Rolfe

Registered manager: Hayley Bell

Inspector

Karen Willson, Social Care Inspector

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