

# SC040500

Registered provider: Salford City Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this secure children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict children's liberty.

The home can care for up to 27 children aged between 10 and 18 years. All places available at the home are commissioned on a contractual basis by the Youth Custody Service. The admission of any child aged under 13 years under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

The commissioning of health services in this home is the statutory responsibility of NHS England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Education is provided on site, in dedicated facilities.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2023.

There were 16 children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

### Inspection dates: 6 to 8 February 2024

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

Children's education and learning **good**

Children's health **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The secure children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 December 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/12/2022	Full	Good
18/01/2022	Full	Good
03/08/2021	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/01/2020	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children grow in confidence and self-esteem. They are able to express their individuality and take pride in their achievements. This is because children receive positive care and support from nurturing staff.

Children benefit from well-planned intervention sessions. These are creative and tailored to support each child's individual needs. Key-work sessions are bespoke to each child, in line with their plans, and this supports their progress. Through this work, children are able to develop an understanding of their behaviours, previous experiences and actions.

Staff support children well as they prepare to leave the home. Children are able to access the community in a timely way when it is assessed as safe and appropriate for them to do so. These temporary releases into the community are well planned and reflect children's individual needs and circumstances. Managers professionally challenge and take appropriate action if children face any barriers from external agencies which may compromise their rehabilitation or preparation for their move. This ensures that children are well prepared for their move on from the home.

Children's wishes, feelings and views are welcomed and listened to. They influence their care plans and the day-to-day running of the home. The independent advocacy service is well used to further empower children to share their views. The monthly consultations, children's chronicle, welcome video and governance board presentations are positive examples of children's engagement and demonstrate their meaningful involvement. These opportunities assist children to build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Children's contact with their families and friends is planned, encouraged and supported, where this is in their best interests. There is good communication between staff, family members, friends and external professionals. Visits to family members are well supported. When visits cannot take place, alternative arrangements are made, for example, keeping in touch by video link. Staff understand the value of these important relationships for children. This enables children to maintain positive relationships with people who support them.

Children take part in a varied range of activities and enjoy using the home's facilities, which include a gym, sports hall and trampoline. Staff encourage children to develop interests and hobbies, for example, writing lyrics and using music to express themselves. These enriching activities help children to grow in confidence, build on their social skills and broaden their positive experiences.

The environment is maintained to a good standard; it is homely and comfortable for children. The atmosphere in the home is relaxed and supportive. However, parts of the outside area look tired and are in need of tidying and improved upkeep.

## **Children's education and learning: good**

The new head of education provides clear leadership and has a good understanding of the strengths of the service and the areas for development. This has brought stability to the provision and enables children to continue to make good progress with their learning.

Teachers develop positive relationships with children and manage the classroom well. Staff use the reward and sanction scheme appropriately. Teachers swiftly challenge any poor behaviour.

Since the last inspection, leaders have broadened the curriculum and made significant improvements to the quality of careers education, advice and guidance. Children study a suitable range of academic and vocational subjects. For example, the introduction of a science course provides children with foundation learning in biology, physics and chemistry. Children understand why they are studying their subjects and how these fit in with their long-term plans.

The head of education has successfully introduced a strategy to improve children's reading skills through the use of phonics. They provide children with ample opportunities to practise and repeat their learning, helping children to improve their recognition of letters and sounds and their reading ability.

Leaders collect a wide range of information about children's starting points from education, health and care plans (EHCPs), speech and language assessments and other baseline assessments. However, a small number of EHCPs are out of date and need review, to ensure that children receive the support that they need now and in the future. Furthermore, teachers do not consistently use the full breadth of information available to set sufficient learning targets for children. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants do not always have a comprehensive set of targets to support their work in the classroom.

Teachers have suitable qualifications and professional experience for their roles. They benefit from appropriate professional development and this improves the quality of teaching over time. Teachers deliver curriculum content well. They provide clear explanations, helpful demonstrations and frequently check children's understanding. Children respond well to the activities that teachers plan. Through skilful teaching, children learn more and remember more about new topics.

Teachers provide clear and helpful written and oral feedback which the children use to improve over time. In practical subjects, children receive helpful feedback through commentaries on video and in photographic evidence.

In art, children show an understanding of different artists and styles and reference these in their workbooks. However, teachers do not specifically teach the foundation drawing skills, shading or importance of perspective. This slows the rate at which children progress. Due to the recent absence of a full-time English specialist,

children's progress in English has also slowed. Temporary teachers rely on working through a set textbook. Some children find this uninspiring.

Leaders have introduced an appropriate personal development curriculum. They teach children about their role in a democracy, the nature and purpose of taxation and the safe use of information technology. Children participate in discussions and activities which explore attitudes towards others.

Children value their education, present their work well and are proud of their achievements. Children who stay in the home for an extended period take recognised qualifications. Most of these children are successful in achieving these.

Teachers provide children with well-structured, regular, individualised opportunities to think about their career ambitions. Children benefit from high-quality independent careers education, information, advice and guidance. They are well prepared for their next steps.

### **Children's health: good**

The Secure Stairs framework for integrated care is well embedded. This process helps to ensure that all children's needs are assessed and identified promptly so that appropriate support systems and strategies can be put in place.

On arrival, children are assessed using comprehensive health assessment tools to identify any physical and mental health needs. Multidisciplinary staff work closely with each other, continually sharing information so that the needs of the children can be met in a timely and supportive way.

When a child is suspected of being neurodiverse, or has already been diagnosed, the healthcare staff are proactive in sharing their knowledge and strategies with other staff. This improves staff's understanding of individual needs and means that they can better support those children. This also helps to reduce any misunderstanding of a child's behaviour that results from them being neurodiverse.

There is excellent liaison between healthcare staff and care staff. For example, plans for healthy eating and exercise are shared with care staff and updates obtained regarding progress, so that changes can be made, where appropriate. This supports children to develop self-awareness and they understand the benefits of leading healthy lifestyles.

Record-keeping by health practitioners is good. Records show in-depth and detailed recording of meetings with children. This ensures that other practitioners accessing these records can easily understand the sometimes complex health needs of the children in their care. This information is then used to ensure that staff practice provides appropriate and high-quality support for children.

The management and administration of medication have improved significantly since the last inspection. This is as a result of an agreed action plan to improve, for

example, staff awareness, and also following external guidance to improve systems and processes.

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

Children said that they feel safe. When issues arise that may place children at risk of harm, the response from staff is timely, appropriate and child-centred. This adds to children's sense of stability and security.

The weekly safety forums are used effectively to share information across the staff teams. This generally ensures risks are understood and appropriate plans are in place to address and reduce risks for children.

Physical restraints used are low level and for very short periods of time. The use of restraint is proportionate and is only used as a last resort. This helps children to feel safe and to keep safe. The well-established links between managers and the local authority designated officer continue to provide regular good-quality external oversight of restraint practice. The low level of restraints over recent months is also indicative of how settled children are and the quality of the relationships that they have with staff across the home.

There is some confusion among staff about what is meant by 'managing away', when a child is placed with one staff member away from their peers. There have been some instances when children have been categorised as being managed away when this has not been the case. While this has not had any impact on children's care or well-being, staff are not always clear about what is meant by single separation, when children are locked in their room, and managing away. Consequently, some records are not always accurate. This has not been consistently identified by leaders and managers who have had oversight of these records.

There are strong processes in place around the use of rewards and consequences. The policy gives staff and children a clear procedure to follow and to understand the consequences for poor behaviour, as well as the use of incentives to reward progress. Children have a voice in this process, to challenge consequences. Managers consider children's views and there are occasions when decisions are overturned as a result. This approach demonstrates the culture of valuing children's voices and opinions.

There is a culture of high expectation in relation to the standards of staff's professional conduct. Performance management processes are used effectively. As a result, only those staff who are safe to work with children and can do so in a child-centred way are employed in the home.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Managers and staff across all disciplines have a good insight into the needs of each child. There is excellent multidisciplinary working, which means that children benefit

from well-planned care which takes account of their diverse needs. This ensures that they make good progress in all aspects of their lives.

There is a well-structured auditing process in place, although the quality of some records is not consistently of a good standard. Not all records contain up-to-date and accurate information. For example, one record relating to the potential use of single separation was not amended, despite a number of reviews by managers. The language used in some reports also lacks sensitivity and some reports are not written in a child-friendly way.

Some children's EHCPs are out of date and not a true account of their needs and aspirations. In these circumstances, although leaders and managers have requested updated plans from the placing authorities, these have not been provided. The action taken by managers is not consistently effective and means that children's plans do not always reflect their needs.

The registered manager has worked diligently to ensure that staffing positions, particularly in leadership roles across the home, are filled. The continuity of care and guidance for children and staff is maintained to a consistently high standard, which provides children with stability.

The arrangements for staff training are a strength of this home. The induction process has been carefully thought through and feedback from new members of staff has helped in shaping the programme. There is well-planned mandatory training which ensures that all members of staff have the skills to support the children in their care. This is complemented with training which enables staff to develop further skills and have the opportunity to progress their career and responsibilities. The training programme motivates staff and helps them to feel valued.

Formal supervision sessions for staff have improved since the last inspection. Audits have enabled managers to identify any shortfalls in both the quality and frequency of supervision. Plans are in place to rectify shortfalls and to ensure that staff receive the support and guidance that they need. As a result, children benefit from consistent staff practice.

The staff team comes from a wide mix of cultures and backgrounds. This provides good role models for the children and helps develop their tolerance and understanding of the diverse nature of society as a whole.

# What does the secure 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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))</p>	1 May 2024

## Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that when the placing authority does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, that they challenge them to meet the child's needs (see Regulations 5 (c). In particular, managers should consider ways to better engage with local authorities and health commissioners to ensure that EHCP's continue to accurately reflect the child's changing needs. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 12, paragraph 2.8)
- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment. In particular, that garden areas are appropriately maintained. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the ethos of the home supports each child to learn. Leaders should use the full breadth of information about children's starting points to set precise learning targets for the children. Leaders should further improve the ambition of the curriculum in English and art. Leaders should improve the quality of support for core subjects in the residential units. ('Guide to



the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.18)

- The registered person should ensure that the behaviour management strategy is understood and applied. In particular, that staff understand the definition of single separation and managing away and record the use of these strategies appropriately. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.34)

## **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'.

## Secure children's home details

**Unique reference number:** SC040500

**Provision sub-type:** Secure unit

**Registered provider:** Salford City Council

**Registered provider address:** Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Manchester  
M27 5DA

**Responsible individual:** Sayma Khan

**Registered manager:** Kay Davidson

## Inspectors

Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector

Thirza Smith, Social Care Inspector

Dawn Parton, Social Care Inspector

Martin Ward, His Majesty's Inspector, Further Education and Skills

Daniel Carrick, Children's Services Inspector, Care Quality Commission

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024