

# Hillcrest Care Ltd - Orange Grove Fostercare

Inspection report for independent fostering agency

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC383805
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 February 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Jacqueline Dunster
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	The Orange Grove Foster Care Agency 203-205 West Malvern Road MALVERN Worcestershire WR14 4BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01684569881
<b>Email</b>	enquiries@theorangegrove.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Hillcrest Care Limited
<b>Registered manager</b>	Regina Dardashti
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Anthony Myers
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	8 October 2008

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Orange Grove Fostercare operates as an independent fostering agency as part of Hillcrest Care Ltd. The parent company is based in West Sussex and the Orange Grove Fostercare head office is based in Malvern, Worcestershire. Orange Grove Fostercare operates registered fostering services across England.

The registered setting in Malvern (Orange Grove) provides services in the Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire regions. The service was first registered in accordance with the Care Standards Act 2000 on 6 November 2008. It operates with its own registered manager and fostering team.

At the time of the inspection the service supports 20 fostering households who care for 27 children and young people.

### **Summary**

During this full inspection which was announced, all key standards were inspected. The inspection focussed on arrangements to meet children and young people's individual needs, to safeguard children and young people's welfare, and to enable children and young people to participate effectively in their day-to-day care.

Orange Grove is judged as satisfactory in all outcome areas. Foster carers are providing good support to children and young people to help them develop self-esteem and achieve their potential. Foster carers receive regular supervision and good quality training. The agency has established practices and procedures to strengthen areas where it has identified weakness in its self-assessment.

There are shortfalls in monitoring, administration, matching documentation and systems to ensure foster carers are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to each individual placement. The organisation of the agency does not fully underpin the work it undertakes. However, the agency has demonstrated capacity to improve and develop over the past year.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

This is the first inspection of the service following registration.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Orange Grove acquires health information at the point of referral and ensures arrangements for medical consent are clear at the outset of the placement. This assists the agency to place children and young people with foster carers who are able to provide for their specific health needs.

The agency provides training and supervision which focuses on meeting the medical, emotional and social development needs of the child or young person. Foster carers are supported by

regular sessions with the agency's psychologist. These practices enable the foster carer to meet the emotional and mental health needs of the child or young person. Early registration with primary care health professionals and support for health checks supports the foster carers to meet the child or young person's medical needs.

Foster carers establish healthy eating and lifestyles for children and young people which increase the likelihood of good health into adulthood.

The agency has introduced a health record for each child and young person which they complete with the foster carer. It provides a comprehensive record of all health interventions which can support consistent health work with children and young people. However, foster placement agreements do not fully outline the child or young person's state of health and identified health needs. This could undermine the effectiveness of the foster carer's work with the child or young person.

Although foster carers maintain good records of health matters, the systems which the agency operates to monitor medication, medical treatment and first aid do not capture all the relevant data. For this reason they do not assist the development of improved quality of care in relation to health needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Orange Grove's foster carers generally provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for children and young people. The agency ensures foster homes remain safe through supervision, health and safety checks and unannounced visits.

Some foster carers do not keep medication locked away within their homes. This has the potential to place children and young people at risk from unsupervised access to medication. Foster carers receive a good standard of training in matters relevant to health and safety. This enables them to keep children and young people safe in and around the home.

The agency generally matches children and young people carefully to foster carers who are able to meet their needs. There are examples of placements which clearly meet the needs and wishes of the children and young people placed. However, the matching documents do not always clearly identify the reasons a match has been made. The foster placement agreements do not clearly outline these reasons or establish how gaps in matching will be addressed. This has the potential to compromise the quality of the matching which could result in failure to meet the individual needs of children and young people placed.

The agency does not clearly establish through these documents why transracial placements have been made or how they will be supported. However, foster carers are working effectively to meet needs in these placements.

The agency does not ensure that a foster placement agreement is completed before the commencement of every placement. This could result in foster carers failing to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to each individual placement and compromise the standard of care.

Each fostering household maintains a general safer caring policy. This is supplemented by an individualised policy which is put in place for each child or young person placed. These are of a good standard and are developed with the involvement of the child or young person. The risk assessments are insufficiently detailed or consistent to assist the planning for safer caring. This could undermine the effectiveness of safer caring in protecting all those in the foster home. Children and young people say they feel safe in their foster homes. This increases the likelihood of placement stability.

The agency has reviewed all policies and procedures relating to safeguarding to provide accurate, comprehensive advice to foster carers, staff and children. This reduces the likelihood of delays in safeguarding children and young people who are at risk of harm.

Orange Grove has sound practices in recruitment and staff vetting to ensure that everyone who works for the agency is suitable to do so and has the required competences and qualifications to undertake their role. Staff are provided with induction, probation and appraisal to ensure they remain suitable to work with children and young people.

The panel is rigorous in testing the information in assessments and does not proceed to recommendation unless fully satisfied by the quality of information available. This assists the agency to approve only those who are suitable to become and remain foster carers.

Although the fostering panel has a blend of backgrounds and skills it does not include someone who has been fostered or had a child fostered. Therefore, it does not benefit from the experience of those who have been subject to foster care.

The fostering panel operates in line with its overall objective to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Although Orange Grove seeks to meet gaps in matching children and young people to foster carers from a different racial background, the matching documents do not clearly outline the measures put in place. This could lead to failure to develop the skills of these foster carers to meet the needs of children and young people placed in transracial placements.

However, there are examples of foster carers working effectively to build the sense of identity of children and young people from black minority ethnic backgrounds. There are also examples of foster carers providing excellent support to unaccompanied asylum seeking minors to improve their English skills and access to education while helping them to build links with their own communities.

Foster carers support disabled children and young people, demonstrating high levels of competence, skill and commitment. They ensure disabled children and young people are actively involved in activities in the wider the community. As a result, the children and young people are growing in confidence and ability.

Foster carers support children and young people to access a wide range of groups, activities and resources in the community. They help them to build positive peer relationships. This enables them to develop self-esteem and social skills.

Foster carers support each child and young person to achieve their educational potential. They place a high value on the benefits of education. They support children and young people's education through attendance at meetings and liaison with schools. They assist children and young people with homework and facilities. This work contributes to improved outcomes in education which is critical to good long term outcomes for children and young people.

The agency has not established an effective system to monitor educational achievements, attendance and exclusions or capture all the relevant data. For this reason it does not assist the development of improved quality of care in relation to education.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Orange Grove establishes clear, recorded arrangements for contact during the matching process. It places children and young people with foster carers who are able to support these arrangements.

Foster carers understand the importance of maintaining links with children and young people's birth families. They encourage children and young people to build relationships with their families and provide emotional support. The agency supports foster carers to undertake this work through training and supervision.

Foster carers provide information to assist the local authority to establish effective, safe arrangements for contact. These practices support children and young people to build and maintain relationships with their birth families. This contributes to the development of their identity, emotional well-being and resilience.

The agency does not ensure that a risk assessment is carried out by the child's local authority social worker prior to the commencement of contact. Failure to do so may place children, young people or foster carers at risk of harm. However, the agency works extensively with local authorities to manage serious risk relating to contact.

Orange Grove regularly seeks children and young people's opinions about issues which affect them. The agency provides newsletters for children and young people. They are able to contact an independent person on the agency's helpline around the clock. They share their views through regular questionnaires, monitoring activity and the review processes. Children and young people indicate that foster carers listen to their views and make changes in response to them.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Orange Grove foster carers provide support to young people to help them to develop the skills they will need for independent living. The agency supports this work in supervision.

The agency has developed training and a workbook for foster carers to support their work in this area. This is scheduled for introduction this year but has not yet taken place.

Foster carers encourage and support young people to develop skills to manage their domestic life, money, education and employment and to develop social skills.

This work to build the skills and confidence of young people increases the likelihood of successful transition to independence.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the fostering service supports satisfactory outcomes for children and young people.

There are good policies and procedures in place to support the roles of foster carers and staff. Orange Grove provides a very good standard of training for staff and foster carers which increases their ability to work effectively with children and young people who are fostered.

The staff team are competent and well-supported by the manager. The agency has provided improved levels of supervision and oversight of their work over the last year. The management team has put in place measures to increase the accountability of staff, for their work and scrutiny of their record keeping and direct work with foster carers.

The agency has satisfactory systems in place to monitor and improve practice and outcomes. However, these are not fully implemented in practice. Failure to regularly monitor the required information may delay speedy interventions and changes in practice and could reduce the quality of care which is offered to children and young people.

The standard of assessments of applicants to foster is steadily improving. However, not all assessments sufficiently analyse negative information in the applicants' medical reports. This could result in children or young people being placed with foster carers who are not medically fit to care for them.

Orange Grove has had difficulty sustaining good quality administrative support to staff. Many of the shortfalls in organisation have been aggravated by the lack of competent, permanent administrative staff. This has resulted in social work staff spending undue amounts of time dealing with administrative tasks. Shortfalls in the file management systems could result in failure to maintain key information. The agency is now in the final stages of recruiting to fill the permanent administrative position.

The placement record does not include the circumstances of the termination of each placement which reduces the integrity of the record and its usefulness in any future legal matters.

Foster carers receive regular, purposeful supervision. However, the agency has not ensured that all foster carers have received the new, compliant foster care agreement. This could compromise the foster carers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The agency ensures staff and foster carers are aware of their responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all children and young people to meet the needs of their race, culture, gender, disability and sexuality. The agency assesses the capacity of potential foster carers to care for children and young people with diverse needs. The procedures to match children and young people to foster carers incorporate plans for meeting the needs of children and young people from black minority ethnic backgrounds, and children and young people who are disabled. However, this process is not fully supported by the matching documents and foster placement



agreements. This could result in children and young people being placed with foster carers who cannot fully meet their needs. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Orange Grove has satisfactory levels of organisation to support the fostering task. However, the agency has taken significant steps over the last six months to address shortfalls and has demonstrated the capacity to improve the service.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Fostering Services Regulations 2005 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
12	ensure the matters and obligations in foster placement agreements include the child's state of health and identified health needs (Regulation 34(3), Schedule 6(1)(c))	3 February 2009
12	ensure the registered person maintains the system for monitoring medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster parents (Regulation 42(1)(a), Schedule 7(9))	27 February 2009
8	ensure before making a placement, the responsible authority enters into a written agreement (the "foster placement agreement") with the foster parent relating to the child, which covers all the matters specified in Schedule 6 (Regulation 34(3))	3 February 2009
9	ensure the welfare of children placed or to be placed with foster carers is safeguarded and promoted at all times, with particular reference to effective use of risk assessments to enable the foster care to protect the foster child, their own children, other children for whom they have responsibility and themselves (Regulation 11(a))	3 February 2009
13	ensure the fostering service establishes a procedure for monitoring the educational attainment, progress and school attendance of children placed with foster carers (Regulation 16(2)(a))	27 February 2009
4	ensure the registered person maintains the system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 7 at appropriate intervals and improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency (Regulation 42(1))	27 February 2009
25	ensure that the record of placement in each foster carer's case record includes the circumstances of the termination of the placement. (Regulation 30(3)(a))	27 February 2009

## Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure written foster placement agreements contain specific reference to elements of matching which were taken into consideration in agreeing the placement and identify areas where foster carers need additional support to compensate for any gaps in the match between the child and carer (National Minimum Standard 8.4)
- ensure one of the independent members of the fostering panel is normally a person who has at any time been placed with foster carers or whose child has at any time been placed with foster carers (National Minimum Standard 30.9)
- ensure, except where an overriding requirement exists, eg a court order, that contact does not take place until the child's social worker has carried out a risk assessment and made arrangements for any supervision that is needed (National Minimum Standard 10.6)
- ensure, in assessing qualities, competences and aptitudes for fostering, applicants for fostering are considered in relation to their health. In particular, the assessment should address matters relating to health raised in the medical report (National Minimum Standard 17.7)
- put in place foster care agreements which ensure foster carers have a full understanding of what is expected of foster carers, the agency and/or the local authority. Specifically the compliant foster care agreement should be put in place for each approved foster carer (National Minimum Standard 22.2)
- ensure there is a system to monitor the quality and adequacy of records, and remedial action is taken when necessary (National Minimum Standard 25.3)
- ensure there is an appropriate level of clerical and administrative support. (National Minimum Standard 16.11)