

# 1229977

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

A local authority runs this home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. The statement of purpose for the home says that it provides a residential experience for children needing accommodation for a period of assessment. It also provides a service to children who need emergency, respite or short-term placements.

There has been no registered manager in post since April 2018. The current manager has made an application to be registered with Ofsted.

**Inspection dates:** 23 to 24 July 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** requires improvement to be good

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of last inspection:** 17 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** declined in effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
17/01/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
04/10/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good
11/05/2017	Full	Inadequate
16/02/2017	Full	Requires improvement

## 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
<p>12.—The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph 1 requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>(a) that staff—</p> <p>(i) assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans and if necessary make arrangements to reduce any risk of harm to the child. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should only accept placements for children where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the child and the existing group of children. There should also be consideration of the staff's ability to meet children's individual and collective needs.</p>	28/09/2018
<p>13.—(1) 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>(a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>(b) promotes their welfare.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>(h) 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> <p>In particular, develop internal and external systems that are effective in identifying areas of shortfall, and ensure that the recording systems support these.</p>	28/09/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p>	28/09/2018

within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes— the name of the child; details of the child’s behaviour leading to the use of the measure; the date, time and location of the use of the measure; a description of the measure and its duration; details of any methods used or steps taken to avoid the need to use the measure; the name of the person who used the measure (“the user”), and of any other person present when the measure was used; the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure; and a description of any injury to the child or any other person, and any medical treatment administered, as a result 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)(b)(c))

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Children are not always well placed in this home. This is because, in some cases, insufficient attention is given to assessing the viability of the placement and the compatibility of children. In addition, assessments are not carried out to make sure that staff can meet individual children's needs or can manage their collective needs.

Although children only stay in the home on a short-term basis, most of them develop good relationships with some staff members. Children who have moved on from the home made positive comments about the staff and the support that staff have given to them.

Staff spend time with children daily and talk to them. Staff try to educate children about how some of the choices they make might put them in danger, but children do not always engage in this work.

Children have made some improvements in their education attendance and in their achievements at school during the period they have been staying in the home.

Staff try to keep children busy during the day so that they learn new skills and have fun. Children do not always want to take part in the planned activities, and because some are frequently missing from care they miss out on many of these opportunities.

Children's health is assessed in a timely way and relevant health services are provided to them. Some children's health improves as a result of being cared for at the home but, despite staff encouraging them, other children do not attend their health appointments.

The work that is carried out with children and their families is a strength of the service. In some cases, work with children and their families to improve their relationships has been highly successful and children have moved back home. Where the work has not led to a return to family, staff help children to begin to come to terms with this. Staff provide helpful support to children to move on to another placement.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Staff sometimes use de-escalation techniques successfully and, on occasion, this has prevented a serious incident. However, children's risk assessments, behaviour management plans and daily strategies are not based on all known information about each child, and they are not all reviewed regularly enough. Consequently, staff do not have clear enough strategies and sufficient written guidance to ensure that they can

always promote children's well-being and safety. These shortfalls have potentially increased the children's vulnerability in the community because some of the children who are living in the home continue to frequently go missing and are believed to be involved in criminal activity. When children go missing staff do take the action that is needed to bring them back. When they are found, children are welcomed back home and are given the chance to talk to someone who is independent from the home about anything that is worrying them.

The use of sanctions is rare; only two have been used since the last inspection. The records of these sanctions do not meet regulation. For example, one was incomplete so it was not clear whether the sanction had been effective.

The manager has built a good working relationship with the local authority designated officer. The manager and the staff consult with the designated officer and refer issues of concern to her in good time. The manager and the staff apply their safeguarding training effectively.

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

The manager knows the children well and is passionate about improving their lives.

The manager has begun to develop good working relationships with other professionals. One professional said: 'They [the manager and staff] are on a journey but they are making positive steps.'

Monitoring arrangements are not thorough enough. The leadership and management team did not know about the shortfalls found during this inspection. The current electronic recording systems hinder the monitoring processes because important information is difficult to find.

Staff recruitment processes minimise the risk of unsuitable people working with the children. The team members either have, or are taking, a relevant qualification in working with children. Staff keep their training up to date, have regular supervision and share the manager's passion for improving the lives of children.

Not all requirements from the last inspection have been met. The quality of assessments carried out before a child is admitted still require improvement.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** 1229977

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Oxfordshire County Council

**Registered provider address:** County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

**Responsible individual:** Daniel Ruaux

**Registered manager:** Post vacant  
Catherine Partlett

## Inspector

Rosie Dancer, social care inspector



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