

# 1244426

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This children's home is run by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to six children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home provides short-term care and accommodation on a shared-care basis for a period of assessment.

The manager was registered with Ofsted on 23 February 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 13 March 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 6 December 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** sustained effectiveness

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 06/12/2018      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness         |
| 27/03/2018      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness          |
| 28/11/2017      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## 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   |
|--|------------|
| The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. In particular the registered person must ensure that—<br>medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and<br>a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child.<br>(Regulation 23 (1)(2)(b)(c)) | 30/04/2019 |

### Recommendations

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.12)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

## Inspection judgements

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

The home is well cared for, homely and meets the needs of the children who live there. Children are encouraged and supported by staff to personalise their rooms, resulting in an increased sense of belonging, with one young person saying that he wishes he could live there forever.

Staff undertake regular key-work sessions with children. This allows them to develop relationships and build trust. Staff spend time with children exploring the complexities of their behaviour constructively. Staff demonstrate a positive approach to managing children's behaviour, helping them to recognise the choices they have in relation to their behaviour, and the positive impact changes can have on their relationships. As a result, children begin to develop an understanding of the importance of healthy relationships, which provides a foundation for them in adulthood.

Children are beginning to regulate their behaviour and emotions, and are better able to communicate issues which cause them worry or distress. Staff understand children's behaviour as a means of communication and work to provide guidance and support to help children to express themselves more constructively.

Children are making good progress in all areas of their lives. Managers and staff recognise the importance of children's successes, and ensure that these are celebrated, which enhances children's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff have high aspirations for children. Children's education is supported by enjoyable activities and outings, which serve as a vehicle for strengthening the relationships between staff and children, while providing children with new experiences and broadening their awareness of opportunities available to them.

Staff work hard to engage parents and to support their understanding of their children's behaviour as a means of expression. Staff work together with parents to devise strategies to manage their children's behaviour, and parents are well supported to deal with the emotional impact this has. This helps parents become attuned to their child's needs and feelings and to understand how children's experiences can have a positive effect on their emotional well-being and behaviour.

One social worker described the progress made by the child he placed as beyond his expectations. Another social worker said that staff have worked hard to ensure that her child is kept safe, and have supported her in gaining a wider understanding of the risky aspects of her behaviour, and to reduce these. As a result, the social worker's aspirations for the child have significantly increased.

Record-keeping is an area of weakness. Staff do not record in a manner which is conducive to children's needs, and recordings do not enhance children's understanding of their time in the home and the decisions which have been made about them. Records

do not demonstrate the approaches used by staff to keep children safe, nor do they describe the relationships and interface between children and their parents in a manner which would enhance children's feelings of self-worth should they choose to read their records.

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

Staff ensure that children are protected and demonstrate good insight into children's emotional needs and how these are communicated through their behaviour. While there are effective systems in place which enable staff and managers to assess the risks children face and to review these on a regular basis, risk assessments are not laid out in a way that is helpful to staff. Insufficient guidance is given about the strategies to be used to reduce identified risks; this has resulted in a reduced awareness of the prevalent issues and inconsistencies in staff approaches. Staff have not undertaken sufficient training in relation to the risks which pertain to one child.

Although procedures in relation to the administration of medication are clear, insufficient care was taken by staff members on one occasion, resulting in an error in the dosage of medication administered to a child. On recognising this error, immediate reparative action was taken to safeguard the child.

Staff demonstrate an understanding that some children may experience difficulties in expressing themselves and there is a strong emphasis upon the strength of the trusting relationships between staff and the children.

Staff respond appropriately when children are missing from care and the actions to be taken in such an event are detailed in each child's care plan, including the arrangements for the provision of return home interviews. Staff demonstrate a familiarity with organisational and local protocols.

Effective health and safety measures keep children and staff safe. The registered manager ensures that due regard for issues of health and safety does not compromise the warm and homely environment. Fire evacuation and equipment checks are undertaken at appropriate intervals.

Children say that they feel safe and that staff protect them. Details about who children can approach should they have a concern or wish to make a complaint are available to them and children are clear that they have a choice in this.

There have been no new employees since the last inspection; however, the manager escalated her concerns about the shortfalls in recruitment processes in order to ensure that when new staff are employed they are fit to do so.

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

The registered manager is suitably qualified and experienced and demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. This is supported by development plans arising from her oversight and management of the service.

The manager is passionate and committed and is ambitious for the children. She leads by example and her aspirational approach is shared by the staff team. She knows the children very well, understands their assessed needs and manages the services according to these. Her approach is child-focused and she is available for the children to talk to.

Children's care plans address their needs comprehensively. The registered manager monitors and reviews children's progress and acts quickly to address any areas of concern. She adopts effective systems and processes to evaluate the quality of care, which focus on improving the service and meeting the needs of the children.

Staff report that they are a cohesive team, who confidently challenge each other and themselves, in an environment where it is safe to do so. Staff describe supervision as an opportunity to reflect on their practice and their relationships with the children. One staff member said that supervision allows him to take an overview of his work, while focusing on children's progress, which reinforces the ethos that the children are at the centre of everything the staff do.

Staff meetings provide a forum for reflection and discussion about children's plans and progress. Staff report that discussions in team meetings provide clarity, consistency and focus.

The statement of purpose is comprehensive and provides a clear and accurate reflection of the purpose of this service and how it is provided.

The registered manager has taken action to address the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. She has ensured that significant events are notified to HMCI in a timely manner, including any updates, and that staff fully understand the organisation's policy on record-keeping. She has regularly audited recordings to ensure that they meet the required standard.

The registered manager has arranged training in order to ensure that staff are able to recognise any signs that a child may be at risk of harm. Further training is required in relation to the identified risks to one child and the registered manager has ensured that this was arranged.

## **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:** 1244426

**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:** Sandra Curley

## Inspectors

Jacqueline Georghiou, social care inspector  
Maire Atherton, social care inspector



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