

1229977

Oxfordshire County Council

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children. It provides a residential experience for children needing accommodation during a period of assessment and for those requiring shared care. Children and families may also receive community support from the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2018.

Inspection date: 24 February 2021

This monitoring visit

This visit was carried out off site. These arrangements were in place to follow guidance issued by Public Health England, in response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The home was last visited on 10 March 2020, when an interim inspection was carried out.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to follow up on concerns arising from safeguarding notifications and the independent visitor's reports. In particular, the information contained within these documents highlighted the following: a medication error, poor health and safety practice in relation to portable appliance testing and fire safety risk assessments, gaps in staff training around safeguarding and physical intervention, concerns about children going missing and poor staff supervision records.

During this visit, the inspector reviewed a range of documents, which were sent in a secure manner. The registered manager and deputy manager were spoken to via video calls. Feedback was also obtained from staff, parents and social workers. The registered manager was aware of the issues leading up to this visit and was able to explain the context and evidence that they had all been addressed.

In May 2020, the home's administration of medication procedure was not followed. A young person was given a homely remedy by a member of staff who failed to get this witnessed by another member of staff. The error was fully investigated by the managers and action taken to prevent a reoccurrence. This included retraining the member of staff, competency checks to ensure that the policy was being followed and ongoing monitoring and performance management.

The portable appliance tests are carried out annually. The last test took place in November 2019, so was due to be repeated in November 2020. However, on checking with the council, which oversees these works, the manager was informed that the procedure had changed and that these tests would be moving to every two years. In the meantime, the manager has put measures in place to reduce any risk. This includes staff doing daily health and safety checks.

The fire risk assessment highlighted some work that needed to be done on the fire doors and glass. The finance for these works has now been agreed and work scheduled to take place soon. In the interim, the manager has obtained reassurance from the fire consultant that these issues do not compromise the fire safety of the home.

Staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme that helps them to carry out their roles. However, the delivery of some face-to-face training for new staff, including around safeguarding and behaviour management, has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this has been addressed through online training, the physical restraint element of the behaviour management course is still on hold. The manager has escalated the urgent need for this training to senior managers and, as a result, plans are in place to ensure that this is carried out as soon as is practicable.

Over the past year, children have benefited from care and support that have led to positive outcomes. The staff have been very good at managing risk-taking behaviours, including incidents of children going missing which were notified to Ofsted and raised some questions about staff practice. Records of these incidents evidence that staff follow procedure and that they know and understand the reasons why the children go missing. The manager has good oversight of all incidents and was able to give examples of when the staff's approach has been changed to prevent a reoccurrence.

The independent visitor reported that staff supervision records were poorly recorded. Upon checking, the manager admitted that this largely related to her notes, and this has since been addressed. Supervision records sampled at this visit showed that staff benefit from meetings taking place regularly, opportunities to reflect on practice, having their training needs identified and clear actions that contribute to their overall development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the way the service is delivered. The staff who usually work in the community with families have been working in the home instead. This has removed the need for external staff to be used to cover shifts and minimised the risk of the COVID-19 virus being transmitted. This, together with strict hygiene measures, effective use of personal protective equipment and staff staying at home if they are symptomatic, has meant that there have been no cases of COVID-19 among the staff or the children.

The staff's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has minimised its impact on the children. Despite the children not being able to participate in their usual activities, the staff have been busy keeping them occupied. The children have benefited from lots of outdoor activities, as well as themed events. Over the half-term holiday, children enjoyed 'around the world in seven days', where they got to learn about different countries, try different foods and play games.

No requirements were made at this visit.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/10/2019	Full	Good
20/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness
23/07/2018	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1229977

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Registered provider address: Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, New Road, Oxfordshire OX1 1ND

Responsible individual: Sarah Duerden

Registered manager: Catherine Partlett

Inspector

Amanda Harvey, Social Care Inspector

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