

# 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 cares for up to six children with 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 registered with Ofsted in February 2017.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 27 January 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

### Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2021

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be 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:** 31 July 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/07/2019	Full	Good
13/03/2019	Full	Good
06/12/2018	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff provide child-centred care. They demonstrate good knowledge and skills that provide children with positive experiences. As a result, children receive good care.

Children make good emotional and social progress. This is made possible through effective multi-agency working between external professionals, internal clinical teams, managers, leaders and the staff team. Children access mental healthcare support and attend medical appointments as required. Members of staff challenge other professionals' advice if it is not in line with the needs of children. This helps to ensure that children's individual emotional and behavioural needs are met.

Even though most children only stay for a short period of time, staff complete thorough assessments and make careful considerations to the needs of both existing and new children. Children, parents and carers are fully involved in the introductions to the home. This helps them to share information and make sure that children's needs are met. One child said she liked being directly involved in the planning for her move into the home.

Staff share positive relationships with families and social workers. One social worker described staff as responsive to suggestions that she gives them regarding the child's needs. One parent said that their son had made so much progress. For example, he follows boundaries better than he did before.

Staff support and encourage children to make good progress educationally. Children who were not attending school before coming to the home now relish going to school. Children said that they enjoy school and they take pride in the progress they make.

Children use the complaint procedures confidently. These procedures are made accessible to them all through the use of different communication methods. Staff use individual and group house meetings to promote a restorative approach to help resolve any issues raised by children. This approach helps them to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and to make amends. Children feel safe to express any concerns or worries and they know that staff listen to them.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities in the community and at home. These include visits to the local fair, arts and crafts, the theatre, trips to London, a holiday to Cornwall, surfing, swimming, go-karting and local walks. These varied experiences help children to discover new interests and visit new places.

Children learn life skills appropriate to their age. Children cook, clean their bedrooms, and complete their laundry. As a result, children become more independent and are well prepared for when they move on.

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

Staff help children to recognise and manage their feelings and emotions. Children are involved in creating their own behaviour management plans with help from staff. However, some children, who would benefit from such a plan, do not have one in place. This negatively impacts on the consistency in the approach used by staff when supporting some children.

The home environment is generally well maintained. However, staff have not established a routine with one child to ensure their bedroom is regularly checked for cleanliness and to ensure that the environment is safe. As a result, one child's bedroom was seen to be in an extremely poor state, including the presence of some potential hazards. Additionally, all children have plastic mattresses when there is no assessed need for them to have this type of mattress. This detracts from an otherwise homely environment.

Staff take appropriate actions to safeguard children if they are missing. Some children were encouraging peers to also go missing with them. The manager of the home took prompt action to work in partnership with the professional network in order to manage this situation and to reduce the risks to children.

Staff and managers have a sound understanding of risk management. Training has resulted in staff managing most children's behaviours without the use of physical intervention. Where restraints have been used, these have been minimal and mainly to remove potentially harmful objects from children. Leaders and managers carefully recruit and select staff to prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

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

The registered manager is passionate and motivational. She knows the children and staff team well. Her enthusiasm and support inspires staff, who appreciate her role modelling of good practice and care. One member of staff said, 'My relationship with my manager is organic, she cares and explores my feelings and thoughts while challenging my practice.'

The registered manager has ensured that effective processes are in place to monitor the progress of children. Children's successes and achievements are identified using several measures. Children are involved in this process, and their progress is shared with their family and social workers. This helps children to reflect on their successes and to see their progress.

The manager has a clear vision to support staff to improve their skills. New staff complete a mandatory training and induction programme. More-experienced staff complete ongoing training, which is monitored well by leaders and managers. This means that children are supported by staff who are skilled and knowledgeable.

Staff receive regular and supportive supervision. Staff build trusting relationships with their supervisors and develop as they reflect on their experiences of supporting children. The manager uses supervisions and annual appraisals effectively to promote professional development. Staff feel listened to and appreciated.

The manager and staff promote equality, diversity and inclusion effectively. Staff challenge any discriminatory language from children. Staff use research and online resources to support discussions held with children in order to enlighten them of the impact of racism. There is a positive culture in the home, which seeks to celebrate and teach children about different cultural backgrounds. Managers make sure that children's opinions are valued, and this helps children to feel included.

## 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>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure –</p> <p>that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies;</p> <p>that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(vii)(b)(d))</p> <p>This specifically relates to ensuring that the home is safe from avoidable hazards and to ensure that staff follow agreed behaviour management plans to ensure that children are properly supervised.</p>	7 December 2021

### Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is a homely and domestic environment. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislation; however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than institutional impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

## **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'.

## Children's home details

**Unique reference number:** 1244426

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

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

**Responsible individual:** Sarah Duerden

**Registered manager:** Sandra Curley

## Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector



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