

1229977

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. It provides care and accommodation for up to six children. The provider states in its statement of purpose that care is provided for children needing an assessment of their needs and for children requiring shared care. The provider also offers outreach support for children and their families.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2018.

Due to COVID-19, at 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 the 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 24 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 January 2022

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: 10 March 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

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

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress while they live in this home. They are supported by a fun, vibrant and a caring staff team that understands the children's backgrounds and needs. Staff have implemented the use of online 'apps' that enable children to communicate directly with their social workers and other professionals. Staff also encourage and prepare the children to attend and engage in their care planning meetings. Staff advocate for them where needed. As a result, children develop a strong voice and are involved in making decisions about their future.

Children attend school regularly. Staff maintain good communication with education staff and are committed in supporting children with their education. This means children's attendance has improved and children enjoy school. One member of staff said they 'help children enjoy school by allowing them to reflect on the good things they do at school and how education will help them in future'.

Children know how to raise concerns and complaints. They have regular group meetings to discuss their views, wishes and feelings. Children also make use of a 'feedback box' and the organisation's hotline number to share their views. The registered manager generally ensures that children's opinions are listened to and responded to in a timely way. However, children reported that their concerns about the plastic mattresses on their beds went unheeded. The use of these mattresses create an institutionalised rather than a homely feel and children do not like them.

Children engage in a variety of activities in and out of the home. They have fun visiting theme parks, attending a local activity centre and learning to swim. The children also enjoy singing and the inspector observed children and staff enjoying a sing-along session. Children's experiences are captured in photographs that decorate the home and are included in their memory books.

Children are supported to develop independence skills such as cooking and completing other household chores. One child informed the inspector that she 'likes cooking Japanese food, and staff help me buy the food and prepare meals for everyone'.

The home is clean and well decorated. The staff team has creatively provided space such as a home cafe where children can spend private time with their families during visits. In addition, the staff team has created a 'recharge room' where children spend time reflecting on their feelings and relaxing.

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

Children engage in thoughtfully planned individual key-work sessions with staff to develop their understanding of how to stay safe.

Staff have a good understanding of children's therapeutic needs. Collaborative working with the clinical psychology team, through reflective practice sessions, has resulted in supportive approaches that help the children to manage their feelings and behaviours. Staff use their knowledge and skills to support families to meet the mental health needs of their children. One parent told the inspector, 'This has helped my child to manage her emotions and respond in a mature way.'

Staff respond promptly when children do not return to the home at agreed times. They follow children's agreed missing-from-home protocols and make sure they return home safely. The registered manager works collectively with families, social workers and the police to ensure that clear plans and boundaries are in place to reduce missing episodes.

Children's personal evacuation plans as part of fire safety are in place. However, these are not shared with the children. Consequently, the registered manager has not ensured that children understand the process of evacuating from the home in case of a fire.

Staff are safely recruited. However, due to the electronic systems used, staff recruitment files are not readily accessible to the registered manager to ensure that all required checks are in place.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is passionate about improving outcomes for the children. Leaders and managers have effective service development plans and have improved care practice to support the children to make progress during their short stay in the home. The registered manager ensures that high-quality assessments are completed to identify the placement needs of the children and to inform their care planning.

Leaders and managers work alongside staff to ensure that the plans and goals set for the children are met. The registered manager ensures that all the children's achievements are celebrated. As a result, children take pride in celebrating all their achievements, such as learning how to put on a tie and learning how to play musical instruments.

The registered manager and staff promote equality and diversity effectively. Children are encouraged to lead projects related to different cultures and learn from these through making posters related to chosen topics. Staff encourage children to talk about their culture and identity, and develop a culture of acceptance and fairness.

Staff feel listened to, cared for and supported by the registered manager. One member of staff said, 'My manager knows me so well, I feel confident to open up and talk to her and even challenge her where needed.' The registered manager and staff receive regular supervision and training that supports their learning and development to meet the needs of the children they care for.

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>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25 (1)(d))</p>	<p>28 February 2022</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home is a homely and domestic environment and 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)
- The registered person should ensure that records kept electronically can be easily accessed when required by anyone with a legitimate need to view them. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations, including the quality standards’, page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: 1229977

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

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

Responsible individual: Sarah Duerden

Registered manager: Catherine Partlett

Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

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