

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.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 January 2023

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	outstanding

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

Date of last inspection: 5 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/01/2022	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/10/2019	Full	Good
20/03/2019	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children currently living in the home are making good progress. They are cared for and supported by a friendly and motivated staff team. Staff know children well and understand their individual needs. One child said, 'I am still a bit new here, but I really like it and staff are cool, meaning good.'

Even though some children attend school and are making progress, others are currently struggling to attend and engage in full-time education. The manager and staff explore ways of supporting the children to return to full-time education. These include providing external tutorials and outdoor school activities.

Children benefit from an environment that is homely and nurturing. Children's bedrooms are decorated with toys and other item of their choice. Their beds have been fitted with new mattresses and managers have implemented a development plan which identifies other improvements required in the home. These include revamping the garden and purchasing new furniture for the lounge. This will give children a more child-friendly garden space to play and improve the home.

Children enjoy a wide range of experiences. Staff support them to participate in enjoyable and enriching activities in the community. This includes evening walks, bike rides, swimming and playing football with the local team. These activities help children keep physically fit and positively stimulated.

Staff and leaders have high aspirations for children to develop their independence skills. Child-centred independence plans are implemented with children's involvement. These give children guidance on preparing for adult life. Consequently, children feel empowered and confidently take their next steps towards adulthood.

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

Staff keep children safe. Clear risk assessments are in place and are reviewed regularly. This ensures that effective guidance is given to staff. The manager and staff hold child-focused discussions with children on how to keep themselves safe and encourage them to take positive risks.

Children know how to make a complaint. They report concerns to the managers and staff. Leaders and managers respond to all complaints. They ensure that these are assessed and escalated for further investigation if required. Allegations are reported to relevant child protection agencies and thoroughly investigated.

Children have previously gone missing from the home. However, staff work collaboratively with families and other agencies to ensure that they are returned home safely. Staff adhere to missing-from-home protocols. They hold discussions

with children regarding accessing the community safely. As a result, children now access the community in a safe and well-planned manner.

Incidents have decreased. This is due to the changes in the dynamics between children, with new children settling and building secure relationships with staff and peers from the outset. Clear behaviour plans and weekly goals indicating the home's expectations have supported children to improve their behaviour. Well-delivered reflective discussions are held with children. However, incidents involving restraints are recorded both in an incident book and electronically, which impacts on the manager's oversight and staff's ability to access information effectively. In practice, the manager does review all serious incidents and incidents of intervention to ensure good practice and to inform learning and care practice.

Children live in a safe environment. Health and safety checks are completed as required. Children are provided with personal evacuation plans when they arrive at the home. These are explained to them and they are given copies to keep in their bedrooms.

Recruitment procedures are extremely thorough. Leaders and managers carefully recruit and select staff who are suitable to care for children and keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager maintains a caring and friendly culture in the home. She has high expectations of the care delivered to children and shares this vision with a committed staff team.

Outstanding monitoring systems are used to monitor children's progress. Staff complete reflective discussions with children using models such as 'My Star' charts and identified weekly goals to give children a clear overview of their progress, while identifying areas of development. This encourages children to make progress from the outset and supports well-planned moves from the home back to families and other permanent placements.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision. Exceptional approaches are used by managers to hold reflective discussions with staff when practice issues have emerged. Managers use clinical supervision and reflective staff meetings to provide guidance and support to staff to improve their practice and identify areas for professional development. Consequently, staff feel valued and listened to.

The leaders and the registered manager provide staff with opportunities to learn and develop. Comprehensive training and development opportunities are provided to support staff to deliver high-quality and consistent care to children. When training is out of date, risk assessments are completed by the manager to give staff guidance on the required practice while they wait for training. This means that staff's skills are constantly being improved to meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers promote equality, diversity and inclusion effectively. Excellent measures are used to support children to understand and accept each other's differences. Children proudly share information about their culture and countries of origin. Children are offered support to join their religious congregations, and any dietary requirements in line with their beliefs and needs are met. Children's opinions are valued and this ensures that they feel included.

Exceptionally creative measures are used to capture children's voices. The managers and leaders have implemented a new key-work format that supports children and staff to engage in a child-centred and enjoyable way. Games are used to encourage children to engage in house meetings, where they take the lead in addressing issues and sharing their thoughts in a respectful manner. The manager and staff address issues raised by children and ensure that their wishes are met.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- Records of restraint must be kept in an accessible format to enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)

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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