

# 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 social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home provides short-term care and accommodation on a shared-care basis for a period of assessment. Five children were living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2017.

### Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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:** 15 November 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/11/2022	Full	Good
04/10/2021	Full	Good
31/07/2019	Full	Good
13/03/2019	Full	Good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

The home offers short-term and shared-care provision. Children move to the home following a carefully considered matching process. The manager and staff review the needs of the child moving in alongside the needs of the children already living in the home.

Children's time with their family is a clear focus and is promoted well. Staff show sensitivity when managing and supporting family relationships and work in partnership with families and professionals to support what matters most to children. One child said, 'The staff are really helping me and my mum so I can return to my family home.'

Children develop secure and trusting relationships with the staff caring for them. Children know how to make a complaint and have opportunities to talk to staff through 'catch-up time' and children's meetings. There is a consistent staff team who know the children well.

Children's views are sought regularly and are valued. Staff listen to children and support them to have a say in the way that they are cared for. For example, children write their safety plans, which inform staff how they would like to be supported when feeling anxious.

The home is spacious, comfortable and furnished to a high standard. The home benefits from separate spaces that allow children to be together or to enjoy individual time with staff and family. Children's bedrooms benefit from en-suite bathrooms and children have personalised them, which gives them a sense of ownership.

Children are encouraged to become more independent. They complete accredited qualifications and learn new skills like doing their laundry and preparing meals. One child has a written agreement to help them to safely walk to the local shops. This helps children prepare for their future.

Children enjoy a range of activities and make progress. However, there are some missed opportunities to further showcase their achievements and better evidence their progress from their starting points.

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

The registered manager understands her safeguarding responsibilities and ensures joined-up working with other professionals. Incidents are well managed and necessary actions are taken to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively. However, records are not always clear about what action has been taken and when. For example, safety plans for one child outlining how the staff should minimise risks

have not been updated. This recording omission does not currently impact on children's care, but this could compromise the effectiveness of new staff, who may rely on an outdated document.

Physical interventions are not used frequently, and the use of consequences is rare. The response to children who go missing is effective and a detailed chronology of events is recorded. Staff are skilled in keeping children safe and are committed to providing an environment where children can thrive physically, emotionally and socially.

Staff recognise where they fit in the wider safeguarding networks. They can identify all external agencies that play a role in supporting the safety and well-being of children. Through the enabling approach of the management team, staff are supported to share any worries. As a result, staff feel confident to raise concerns regarding staff practice. This contributes to the healthy safeguarding culture in the home.

Staff ensure that children's mental health and emotional well-being are given priority. The organisation has strong links with health professionals.

Good recruitment practices are in place. This ensures that only appropriately vetted individuals work at the home and provide care for children. Senior staff are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that effective health and safety processes are in place.

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

The registered manager is dedicated and passionate, has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and understands the needs of the children. There are highly effective monitoring systems in place. Consequently, the management team has good oversight of children's day-to-day experiences and the progress that they make.

The conscientious registered manager and deputy manager demonstrate a passionate commitment to ensuring high standards of care for children and provide good management support to staff through effective supervision. These sessions provide staff with space to reflect on their practice. Staff respect and value their managers' leadership.

The management arrangements provide a supportive, collaborative and caring culture in the home for everyone. There is a real sense of teamwork and of strong working relationships. Staff acknowledge difficulties and support each other. This provides a stable team for the children. One member of staff said, 'I firmly believe that I have grown in my role. This has had a significant impact on my work with the young people and enables an environment where they can grow too.'

Social workers speak very highly of the care provided by the staff and the registered manager. They particularly highlight the quality of support that each child receives

and are very positive regarding communication and partnership working. This demonstrates a culture of openness, which keeps children's needs at the heart of decision-making. One professional said, 'The home is really supportive about family time, relationships and wanting the reintegration with families to be right.'

Staff benefit from receiving high-quality training that enables them to meet the children's needs well. Internal training and clinical group meetings are delivered regularly with the staff. This provides a safe forum for the team to explore and develop their knowledge of the home's therapeutic model of care and relate this to their practice. One parent said, 'Whatever they have done, it has changed him.'

Staff acknowledge how children are feeling and help them to understand their emotions. There is a real sense of warmth between staff and children. Staff take time to invest in children. One professional said, 'Managers are relentless, and they ensure robust plans are in place. They are so proactive.'

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff fully recognise and celebrate the progress and achievements of their children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.7)
- The registered person should keep case records up to date and ensure that they are signed and dated by the author. This is in relation to children's risk assessments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

### **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:** Oxfordshire County Council

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

**Responsible individual:** Sarah Duerden

**Registered manager:** Sandra Curley

## Inspectors

Hannah Cox, Social Care Inspector

Tash Williams, Social Care Inspector

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