

SC032439

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is registered to provide a short-breaks service for up to seven children at a time. Some children may have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or sensory impairment. Wiltshire local authority operates the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2020.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 October 2024

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: 21 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/11/2023	Full	Good
13/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
22/02/2022	Full	Inadequate
28/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There were four children present during the inspection. The inspectors saw all of the children and spent time with them.

The home has been designed with children in mind. It is warm and inviting. Brightly coloured walls, decorations and the use of lighting make it feel magical in some spaces. The smell of cooking and baking contributes to the pleasant atmosphere.

Staff are respectful and kind towards children. Their interactions are caring, energetic and playful. Children enjoy playing with staff, and they are encouraged to participate in varied activities, for example arts and crafts, imaginative play and visiting the farm. Children have access to a sensory room, projectors and, more recently, an interactive table. The latter has resulted in children spending more time together, playing virtual games.

Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs, and they deliver care in accordance with agreed plans. One father said that staff 'get on my son's level and get the best out of him'. Staff help children to make progress in areas that are meaningful for their development. For example, staff have helped one child to increase their tolerance towards other people. They have supported another child to eat meals at the table.

The children have their own preferred methods of communication, and staff demonstrate a good understanding of this. For example, they were observed to communicate with one child via a tablet, while using short sentences to communicate with other children. Staff's proactive approach means that they are able to offer children choice, allowing them to make decisions about activities and food and communicate with their parents during visits.

Inclusivity is clearly important to staff, and this is reflected in the home. There is a lift for children who use wheelchairs, and garden planters have been raised so that they can participate in gardening. Children have access to books that celebrate differences and illustrate characters that look like them. Staff cater to children's religious needs, for example reading a prayer to one child before they go to bed.

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

Staff recognise that children's behaviours are a form of communication. They support children to make good decisions using encouragement and praise, which reinforces their positive behaviours. There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection, and when children show signs of distress, this rarely results in incidents of concern. Staff use appropriate strategies to support children, which means the home is relatively settled.

Staff have participated in training that has boosted their knowledge and confidence in the context of safeguarding concerns. Staff know how to appropriately respond and escalate concerns when children visit the home with unexplained marks or bruising. They consider the location of injuries before deciding whether it is appropriate to liaise with parents. Staff make gentle efforts to capture the children's views but refrain from investigating, knowing that this responsibility sits with the local authority.

The registered manager and senior support workers have established good working relationships with external professionals, including the children's allocated social workers and the duty team. Staff sometimes visit children at school, showing curiosity about their experiences outside of the home and exploring what works well in other settings. Staff attend the children's local authority meetings, sharing their insights and making contributions to children's care plans.

The registered manager and senior leaders demonstrated a robust response to a medication error that went unnoticed for several weeks. They alerted the child's parents and quickly conducted an internal investigation. Leaders commissioned an external service to deliver training to staff and to reassess their competency in administering medication and keeping accurate records. Managers' oversight and scrutiny of children's medical records has improved.

The emergency plans for children who have dormant epilepsy are not easily visible, and it is unclear who has provided the home with guidance. The registered manager has started to devise epilepsy information sheets for these children to provide staff with the essential written information they need.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is a child-focused practitioner who keeps children's best interests at the centre of decision-making. He has demonstrated tenacity in challenging social workers if he is dissatisfied with their response to escalating concerns. While demonstrating empathy towards parents, he also reminds them of staff's safeguarding responsibilities towards children.

The registered manager has established an open safeguarding culture in the home. Staff describe him as approachable and supportive. Consequently, they are honest when they make mistakes and seek his guidance. Staff are confident to share any concerns about their colleagues with the registered manager, knowing that they will be taken seriously. The registered manager has a tactful approach towards managing concerns about staff, while prioritising the welfare of children.

The registered manager is ambitious and aspirational for children. For example, he has collaborated with an education provider to offer courses to the children. Staff are currently supporting five children to complete courses, and they hope to enrol more children soon. The registered manager is offering continued support to families when

transitions to adult services are delayed. He creates a support package for the families, which involves advocating on their behalf, taking children to visit their new homes and helping to foster positive relationships between children and their new staff teams.

The registered manager recognises when staff are unable to meet the complex needs of children visiting the home. He uses observations to quickly establish whether their placement is feasible and safe. He takes appropriate action when placements are unsuitable, for example requesting meetings with social workers and making recommendations about alternative services that could meet the children's needs. This realistic approach keeps children safe.

The registered manager is leaving the home in December 2024, and leaders intend to increase their oversight of the home until a new manager is appointed.

No requirements or recommendations have been made.

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: SC032439

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wiltshire Council

Registered provider address: Director of Social Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8LE

Responsible individual: Netty Lee

Registered manager: Kevin Derby

Inspectors

Tara Webb, Social Care Inspector
Emma Fryer, Social Care Inspector

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