

1185488

Registered provider: Kennet Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. The home provides care for up to three children between the ages of eight and 17 who may experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, one child was living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2024	Full	Good
27/03/2023	Full	Good
05/07/2021	Full	Good
25/02/2020	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, three children have moved on from the home. One child left a note thanking staff for everything they did for them. Staff build positive relationships with all the children in their care.

The child is making progress because they are supported by well-trained staff. Staff care for the child and speak proudly of the progress they have made. External professionals describe how the care and resilience of the staff have contributed towards the child's progress.

The staff ensure that the child is listened to and their views are valued. The child has regular opportunities to discuss any changes in the home that they would like and to choose meals and activities. The child has been able to personalise their bedroom and decorate it to their own taste. The child is also able to contribute to some of their plans. This ensures that the child feels consulted and respected and that everyone is aware of what the child wants.

The child accesses a wide variety of activities. Staff have supported the child to visit the zoo and theme parks. Staff have encouraged the child to experience new activities they have not tried before. Staff supported the child to enjoy a holiday in the UK. Photos around the home show the child's experiences, and memory books help capture the experiences for them. The child said they enjoy looking through their memory books.

Staff promote the importance of education. Although the child does not have a formal school placement, the staff have arranged tutor sessions for the child and an off-site provision one day a week. The child engages in the education provided for them because of the expectations staff have implemented around education. The child's tutor describes the good progress the child has made with their education. The manager is consistently challenging the local authority around the lack of education provision for the child.

Staff support the child to spend time with family members who are important to them. The manager is liaising with the local authority so the child can spend time with additional family members. This will increase the child's family network. The manager has ensured that there are robust plans in place to support the child to spend time with their family.

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

Staff understand the child's risks and vulnerabilities, keeping the child safe. The staff have undertaken direct work with the child to understand how to stay safe online. They have appropriate controls in place. Staff set clear boundaries about when and

how phones and devices are allowed. The child has recently been given access to their smart phone again because of the keeping safe work they have completed with staff.

Missing-from-home episodes have reduced. When the child has been missing from home, they have experienced well-coordinated responses from staff. Staff look for the child and follow the child's agreed safety plans to ensure their safe return home. The child has access to independent professionals when they return, with opportunities to explore why they were missing from home.

The manager is committed to only employing suitable staff, and recruitment processes are thorough. The manager carries out additional checks, such as driving licence checks, to ensure that staff are also responsible outside of the home and are safe to work with vulnerable children. Before an offer of employment, individuals are asked to complete a supervised shift so their interactions with the child can be seen and assessed. This gives an extra layer of scrutiny on their suitability for the role.

Staff have recently started attending a safer neighbourhood forum. This allows the organisation to build relationships with local residents. The forum also shares intelligence on antisocial behaviour hotspots within the community. As a result, staff are more informed of areas to avoid, keeping the child safe when they are out in the local area.

Staff support the child to understand and communicate their emotions without the use of physical intervention. Since the last inspection, there has been one incident of physical intervention. This was used as a last resort and to keep the child safe. After every incident, the children are given the opportunity to reflect on what has happened and share their thoughts and feelings. This allows staff to have a better understanding of what the child is potentially trying to communicate through their behaviour. The child's individual positive behaviour support plan is clear and gives easy guidance for staff to follow. However, the plans do not detail which restraint techniques are appropriate, should staff be required to restrain a child.

The manager generally manages safeguarding concerns well. However, in her absence, there was a delay in senior leaders reporting this concern to the child's placing authority social worker. On this occasion, there was no direct effect on the child's safety. To ensure this shortfall is not repeated, the manager regularly provides staff with safeguarding scenarios so she can assess their responses on how they would manage concerns. This has upskilled staff and improved their safeguarding knowledge.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager knows the child well and has developed a good relationship with them. She is a strong advocate for them and has challenged any decisions made that she believes are not in their best interests. The manager is dedicated to improving outcomes for the child in her care.

The manager maintains effective monitoring and oversight. She has a well-rounded view of the progress the child is making and the quality of care the child receives from staff. In addition, monthly leadership meetings with the assistant manager and team leaders support her oversight of the home. These meetings also help to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop plans to address any shortfalls. Team leaders are also able to feed back on the progress staff are making because of the extra mentoring sessions team leaders provide to them.

New staff benefit from well-planned inductions with the organisation's induction manager before they are introduced on shift. Staff then complete an in-house induction overseen by the manager. This helps to embed their knowledge and build on their confidence in the role.

Staff have access to effective systems of support and supervision. Leaders provide regular, reflective supervision sessions and annual appraisals. Staff are also able to attend group supervisions, which provide them with opportunities to reflect on the work that they are doing with the child. These sessions are chaired by an external therapist. Staff can have individual sessions with the therapist if these are required. As a result, staff feel well supported by the manager, and the team's morale is positive.

The managers are thoughtful about the children's needs before making decisions about who should live in the home. When placements have not been successful, the manager has ensured there have been learning reviews to understand what has happened.

Placement plans for the child do not clearly show how staff plan to meet the child's needs. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that all staff are fully aware of plans and targets for the child. Language used in the plans is not child centred and could be detrimental to the child if they saw it. The manager is aware of this and is working with staff to improve the language used in the child's documents.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that placement plans for children form the basis of their care and use positive, child-centred language. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.1)

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: 1185488

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Kennet Care Limited

Registered provider address: Goringe Accountants Waterside, 1650 Arlington Business Park, Theale, Berkshire RG7 4SA

Responsible individual: Dennis Austin-Visser

Registered manager: Lauren Follett-Smith

Inspector

Louise Webling, Social Care Inspector

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