

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 Oxfordshire local authority. It provides care for up to six children who need an assessment of their needs and/or require shared care arrangements. The provider also offers outreach support for children and their families.

At the time of the inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2018.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 March 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 28 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/11/2023	Full	Outstanding
16/01/2023	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Full	Good
10/03/2020	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have secure and trusting relationships with staff. A parent said, 'Staff take the time to understand the children's needs and work with them individually.' The children say that they feel valued and loved. The staff are highly skilled in caring for the children and understanding their needs. To welcome new children to the home, staff bake their favourite cakes, which gives the children a nurturing welcome. As a result of this approach, one child's parent said their child has 'made exceptional progress'.

Managers plan the children's moves into the home effectively. The manager diligently assesses the needs of the children, ensuring that the staff have the skills to care for them. This assessment thoughtfully considers the needs of the other children living at the home. The new children are introduced to the home in a planned way and quickly settle in.

Staff have a sharp focus on helping the children to be ready to move on. They work closely with professionals from relevant agencies to help understand and share risks for the children. The organisation completes detailed assessments that inform decisions about future care planning for the children. After the children have moved on, staff continue to visit them for the first few months, as well as providing support to the parents.

Staff creatively promote education. One child did not like going to school as they were not familiar with the school setting. Staff went into school and attended classes with the child to help them feel safe. Furthermore, they worked with the child's older brother to attend some of the school activities with him. This encouraged the child to feel confident to participate in various activities. As a result, children engage in more education.

The home environment is welcoming with a spacious kitchen and garden area. The children can spend time together in the games room or have individual time in sensory or arts rooms. Staff talk passionately about the children and their achievements. One child said, 'It is a lovely big home.'

The staff create an inclusive culture for the children. The children are supported by a diverse staff team. The staff help the children explore their identity. They helped one child feel safe to explore their gender identity through thoughtful and sensitive practice.

Children have opportunities to engage in a range of activities. The staff take them on day trips in the local area, going to the beach and going out for meals.

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

Staff understand safeguarding extremely well. They have excellent working relationships with the professionals who have a role in the children's lives, ensuring that all agencies

take responsibility to keep the children safe. Staff ensure all risk assessments are clear and updated and are included in children's long-term care plans. They hold the children's best interests at the forefront of all decision-making.

Staff work hard to ensure that children are found if they have gone missing from home. They provide expert care and support when they return. Staff have built good relationships with key people in the community, such as bus drivers and shop owners, and this helps them to locate the children when they have gone missing from home. Staff always look for the children when they are missing, and one child said, 'The staff are nice', and that they 'care about me'. Staff's relationships with the local community have reduced the number of times that the children are missing and have also helped the children become part of the local community. The staff complete excellent records of incidents, which the manager uses to strengthen their oversight and to spot emerging trends.

One child becomes distressed regularly and the staff are working very closely with the relevant agencies to ensure that the child is kept safe and protected. They create and deliver plans that help the child develop insight into their emotions and maintain relationships with staff. Staff work closely with birth families, ensuring plans are shared. This results in everyone working together to ensure they maintain a high standard of care for the children. Staff rarely need to use physical intervention and place emphasis on helping the children talk about their emotions.

Children's views are included in every aspect of their planning. Staff take time and care when working with the children. They diligently work through the risks, focusing on how to manage them, which encourages the children to learn and understand their behaviour and make positive changes. As a result, risks are reducing for the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager is leaving their role. There has been thoughtful consideration about succession planning to reduce any disruption and to maximise stability for the children. The deputy manager has been appointed as the new manager. They are completing their induction into the role and will continue to receive support from another manager from a different home to help ensure that the quality of care continues.

The manager and the deputy manager are very dedicated to and enthusiastic about the children in their care. External professionals and staff all speak very highly about the manager. One social worker said, 'The care provided by the team is outstanding.'

The manager has created a culture of high aspirations and positivity in her team. Staff supervision is reflective and is used well to set clear goals about what needs to be achieved for each child. These goals correlate with the children's care plans, ensuring their progress is being continually reviewed.

The manager ensured that her staff received specialised training when they had a child expressing a gender identity different from the one assigned at birth. Staff understood that they needed to listen and be supportive of the child's needs and explore their identity with them. Staff have a folder of resources that they can access to refresh their learning and to help them to support the child sensitively.

Staff benefit from the clinical psychology team that is available for them to consult with, as and when needed. They also have access to a consultant psychiatrist, who provides crucial advice that helps them to better understand the children's emotions. Additionally, the clinical psychology team provides outreach work to parents in the community to support a smooth move for those children who are returning to the care of their families.

The manager has a team of long-standing confident staff members who are committed to ensuring the children make positive progress. The manager prioritises the well-being of the staff. The 'wellness basket' that she has arranged, and which all staff can access, is just one example of the actions she has taken to ensure that the staff feel valued and respected. This respect and value transfers into the diligent care staff provide to the children.

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: County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

Responsible individual: Claire Lewis

Registered manager: Catherine Partlett

Inspector

Shaheda Dhandia, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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