

1229977

Registered provider: Oxfordshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority. It provides care for up to 6 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 this inspection, one child was living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2025.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

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: 18 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2025	Full	Outstanding
28/11/2023	Full	Outstanding
16/01/2023	Full	Good
05/01/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The staff team demonstrates an exceptionally strong commitment to providing children with stability, safety and high-quality nurturing care. Children consistently report feeling heard, valued and understood. Staff invest significant time in developing meaningful relationships with children, resulting in secure attachments and a strong sense of belonging. Children describe the home as the 'best' place they have lived and say that they feel safe, reflecting the high quality of the care provided.

Children's health needs are met to an excellent standard. Staff have managed one child's complex health needs with exceptional diligence and skill. They carried out targeted and specialist training to fully understand the child's condition, enabling them to provide highly effective support. As a result, the child can manage her health needs independently.

There is exemplary practice in maintaining and strengthening family relationships. Staff ensure that family time is meaningful, even in circumstances that present significant challenges. Therapeutic support for parents is embedded in practice and has led to excellent outcomes. A parent noted how she never thought that she would rebuild a positive relationship with her child and expressed deep gratitude to the staff whose support enabled this transformation.

Education is promoted with exceptional consistency and creativity. Staff tirelessly collaborate with external partners to support children's school attendance and address any barriers. Personalised study linked to one child's interests has increased his confidence and readiness to re-engage with learning.

Staff are highly skilled advocates for children. They confidently challenge external agencies, including education providers, to ensure that children receive appropriate support in school and their needs are met. Staff's high expectations and persistence lead to improved outcomes for children.

A wide variety of high-quality activities enrich children's experiences, supporting their wellbeing, independence and enjoyment. Activities such as baking, canoeing, visits to parks and trips to the beach help children build confidence, resilience and positive memories.

Transitions into the home are carefully managed. Risk assessments are thorough and child focused, and they ensure that children's needs are fully understood from the outset. Staff equally support children's transitions out of the home, using a life-story book and gifts to end children's time at the home positively. Staff maintain supportive relationships with children after they move on, offering stability and reassurance during times of change. The fact that children choose to maintain contact after they leave is

strong evidence of the trust, emotional security and connections that they have developed with staff.

Children are empowered to express their views and influence life in the home. House meetings are meaningful and engaging, where children are encouraged to reflect on their experiences, including current world events and how these may affect them. These discussions support children in developing emotional literacy and critical-thinking skills, helping them understand and navigate the world around them.

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

Staff have a thorough understanding of each child's risks, vulnerabilities and personal history. Risk assessments are detailed, dynamic and updated promptly in response to any new information. Clear, practical guidance ensures that staff respond consistently and confidently, providing children with a highly protective environment.

Staff build trusted, secure relationships with children, enabling open and honest conversations with them about their worries, feelings and unsafe situations. Children know they have adults whom they can rely on, and this trust is the foundation of the home's highly effective safeguarding practice.

Key-work sessions are meticulously planned around each child's assessed risks and needs. Staff also deliver skilled, responsive ad hoc work, ensuring that safeguarding support is immediate and meaningful. These sessions help children understand risk, recognise unsafe situations and explore safer ways of coping.

Staff analyse children's behaviours with curiosity and emotional intelligence. They look beyond the behaviour to understand the child's fears and unmet needs. Through reflective practice and careful observation, staff identify patterns early and adapt support quickly. This relational safeguarding approach led to one child's medical team adjusting her medication after staff recognised important behavioural indicators, a clear example of outstanding professional practice.

Missing-from-care episodes are managed with urgency, care and persistence. Staff actively search for children in the community and maintain close communication until they return safely. Strong relationships and sensitive work carried out when children return home enable them to disclose concerns, leading to effective multi-agency action to reduce risks by implementing appropriate safety plans.

Children who self-harm receive highly sensitive, well-coordinated support. Robust plans guide staff responses, while relational work helps children develop positive self-belief, emotional regulation and a stronger sense of identity.

Staff carry out clear and compassionate direct work with children who are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation or who are experimenting with drugs or alcohol. These interventions help children understand risks, peer pressure and unsafe choices.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The manager provides inspirational, child-centred leadership that sets a clear vision of high expectations with continual improvement. Her ambitious and creative approach drives a culture where excellent practice thrives, and children consistently experience outstanding outcomes.

The manager knows her team extremely well. She has a clear understanding of each member's strengths and areas for development. This insight allows her to delegate effectively, provide targeted support and nurture professional growth. Staff consistently demonstrate high-quality, reflective practice because they feel valued, guided and equipped to do their best work.

The manager demonstrates a personal commitment to maintaining relationships with the children. When she is away from the home for extended periods, she writes personalised letters to each child, celebrating their progress, strengths and achievements. This thoughtful, child-focused approach reinforces the children's sense of belonging and illustrates that they always remain a priority in the manager's mind.

Care planning is robust, dynamic and regularly reviewed. The manager ensures that children's plans accurately reflect their changing needs and circumstances. Staff routinely analyse reports from the independent visitor, identifying themes, strengths and gaps in practice. These are explored in team meetings, where clear, solution-focused action plans are developed. This reflective and collaborative process ensures that any shortfalls are addressed swiftly and effectively.

Safeguarding leadership is extremely strong. All safeguarding concerns are reported promptly and investigated thoroughly. The manager seeks external professional advice when required, ensuring transparency and robust decision-making. Safeguarding themes and learning are explored during supervision sessions and team meetings, embedding a culture of continuous improvement.

Supervision sessions are detailed, reflective and purposeful. Staff are given protected time to discuss practice, explore challenges and reflect on the needs of the children in their care. The manager embeds research-informed themes each month, encouraging staff to think critically and develop evidence-based approaches. Clear action plans promote accountability and ongoing professional development.

Staff describe the management team as 'exceptionally supportive'. They feel that their emotional wellbeing is prioritised, and they benefit from an open, approachable culture where they can express concerns and ideas safely. Staff are encouraged to consider their career aspirations, and they speak positively about the developmental opportunities available to them. This results in a motivated, stable and confident workforce.

The manager's oversight, ambition and relational leadership have created a home where children are consistently at the centre of practice. Staff feel proud of their work, and children feel valued and safe. Professional partnerships are strong and purposeful.

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: Charlotte Davey

Registered manager: Sarah-Jane Gungadoo

Inspector

Shaheda Dhandia, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026