

# 1230268

Registered provider: Kites Children Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is one of 2 children's homes run by a private provider. The home provides specialist therapeutic care and treatment for up to 5 children with complex needs.

The manager registered in May 2025.

There were 5 children living at the home at the time of the inspection.

### Inspection dates: 19 and 20 May 2026

|                                                                                           |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <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 | good |
|-------------------------------------------|------|

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of last inspection:** 13 May 2025

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** At the inspection on the 4 November 2025, significant and widespread concerns were identified. Ofsted served 3 compliance notices regarding the safeguarding of children, leadership and management and children's views, wishes and feelings. Ofsted issued a notice of restriction of accommodation to prevent the provider from moving any children into the home. A monitoring visit took place on 6 January 2025 when the steps in the compliance notices were found to be met. The provider had complied with the restriction of accommodation.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement            |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 13/05/2025      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |
| 20/05/2024      | Full            | Good                            |
| 21/06/2023      | Full            | Good                            |
| 06/06/2022      | Full            | Requires improvement to be good |

## Summary of findings

Staff demonstrate a commitment to building positive and trusting relationships with children. Children benefit from the care provided by staff. The staff focus on meeting their individual needs. They listen to children, provide reassurance and offer one-to-one support and encouragement. Children engage in education, activities and daily routines. This has supported children to make progress with their life skills, social opportunities and education.

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have worked hard to improve the culture at the home and prioritise children's views. This has led to staff ensuring that children's views are central to informing their practice and has improved the consistency of care for the children.

## Inspection judgements

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

Children's milestones and achievements are recognised and rewarded. Staff work with children to accomplish individualised goals and regularly discuss their progress with them. Children acknowledge and are proud of the achievements they make.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities and attend clubs that support their enjoyment. These include youth clubs and clubs for martial arts, football and gaming. Children often take part in group activities. This helps them to build positive relationships with one another.

Staff work hard to replicate a domestic family home. The interactions between staff and children are warm, respectful and receptive. Children are encouraged to play, with games such as hide and seek, tag and garden games actively encouraged. This supports children to benefit from strong emotional connections with staff.

Three children have moved out since the last inspection. These were planned moves. Children were prepared to leave and their time in the home celebrated. Children who have moved out have received wellbeing check-ins from staff, and others have returned to visit. This has helped children to maintain relationships they built at the home. Three children have moved in. Each move has been well supported by the manager and staff. Children describe the help they received to feel at ease with moving. One child described enjoying a sleepover to 'test the home' before they moved in, and others described tours of the home.

Children are supported to spend time with friends, family and people who are important to them. When barriers arise, such as distance, staff take action to reduce these barriers. For some children, this included staff supporting them to meet with friends who live far away.

Children are doing well with their learning and have good attendance. Staff support children to attend provisions that suit their needs. One child is taking their GCSEs, and another child is preparing to finish a college course. Staff have supported both children with exams through revision and considering career options. This approach supports children's attainment and supports them to prepare for their futures.

Children take an active role in their care planning. Staff support children to prepare for their care planning meetings and express their views. One child confidently presented a rationale to the local authority about reduced restrictions. As a result, the child is able to spend more unsupported time in the community.

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

When children raise concerns, these are responded to appropriately and taken seriously. Children are supported with an immediate response, which is then followed up with a formal response from the manager. Children are consulted to ensure that they are satisfied with the outcome of their concern. The manager uses the learning from children's complaints and shares this with staff. This approach helps staff to develop their practice.

Restraint is rarely used because staff use alternative methods to support children to manage their emotions. On the few occasions restraint has been used, this has been a last resort to support the child and staff to remain safe. Children are spoken to afterwards and offered aftercare. The manager reviews restraints to ensure their proportionality and use.

Detailed discussions and support sessions take place with children on relevant topics and risks they face. Topics include digital safety, healthy relationships and sexual education. Sessions are often revisited with children, and staff adjust these to reflect new or emerging risks for the children. This approach supports children to develop appropriate strategies and tools to manage the challenges they face.

Consequences given to children are proportionate, restorative and reflect real-life expectations. They are designed to support children in developing accountability, understanding the impact of their actions and building independence skills. This has supported children's behaviour and helped them to understand future expectations.

Risk assessments and safety plans are detailed and updated to reflect existing and emerging risks the children face. One child's plan required constant supervision, which is not always provided, to ensure that they and others are kept safe. The manager reflected that staff allocation was not yet in place to support this protective measure being followed. This measure in particular needs further development to ensure that it is effective and consistently applied.

Safer recruitment checks are in place, and leaders and managers ensure that staff are appropriate to work with the children. Newer staff members are supported to complete

inductions to support their understanding of their role. However, a staff member was unable to detail the home's whistleblowing policy effectively. This does not ensure that all staff are confident in how to report whistleblowing concerns.

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

The manager is suitably experienced and dedicated to their role. An experienced responsible individual supports him. Staff are positive about working at the home and said that there has been a positive shift in the culture of the home. Leaders have been central to this positive change. This commitment and collaborative working of the registered manager and responsible individual have helped to achieve this.

Staff receive regular practice-related supervision sessions that support their personal development and wellbeing. Staff reflect on the children's progress and how they use the home's ethos to meet the children's needs.

The manager makes effective use of a range of quality assurance systems that support his understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. These include a detailed internal quality of care review that fully incorporates and considers the views of children, professionals and their families. This, combined with good-quality visits from an independent visitor, has improved practice.

Regular team meetings and case discussions take place with the home's allocated therapist. Discussions are detailed, and the children's needs are spoken about at length. These help the manager and staff reflect on their practice and identify additional areas to implement children's support and improve practice. This approach supports staff reflection and helps to identify areas to improve the quality of care for children.

Professionals and family members provided consistent positive feedback about the care that is offered to children. The manager understands the importance of working collaboratively with the children's wider network to ensure that they receive appropriate support when required. Regular consultations take place with mental health professionals and the police. A professional said, 'They have approached me directly to ask for advice around criminal matters or to conduct home visits to meet the children to discuss and address offending behaviour and safety. I would say that they provide a gold standard service. I strongly believe they are keeping their children safe in a child-focused home-like environment'.

There is a good range of training to equip staff with the skills they need to meet children's individual needs. However, staff have not received training to support one child's neurodevelopmental condition. At times, this has impacted on staff being able to communicate effectively with the child in a way they understand.

Appropriate tools used by the manager assess the compatibility of children moving in and identifying additional measures that they would need to ensure that children can live together positively.

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

### **Recommendations**

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs. In particular, they should ensure that staff receive training in neurodevelopmental conditions. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should ensure that supervision of staff practice should ensure that individual adults in the home are engaged in the safeguarding culture of the home. In particular, they should ensure that staff are confident and know how to apply the risk reduction measures in children's risk assessments. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.14)
- The registered person should ensure that staff are made familiar with the home's internal whistleblowing procedures through the induction process. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.3)

### **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:** 1230268

**Provision sub-type:** Children's home

**Registered provider:** Kites Children Services Limited

**Registered provider address:** The Forge, Langham, Colchester CO4 5PX

**Responsible individual:** Deborah Carr

**Registered manager:** Dylan Older

## Inspectors

Syvanna Matthew, Social Care Inspector  
Daniel Sancto, Social Care Inspector

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