

1230411

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is run by a local authority and provides care for one child who experiences social and emotional difficulties.

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

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2025.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 November 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: 4 June 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/06/2024	Full	Good
28/06/2023	Full	Good
17/02/2023	Full	Good
20/07/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection, the home has individually supported four children.

Children make exceptional progress from their starting points because they are supported by a caring and empathetic staff team that is highly attuned to their needs. Staff have built warm, trusting relationships with the child, enabling them to feel comfortable sharing their feelings and discussing any worries or concerns.

Staff understand the significant impact of their work and how it contributes to children's development. They are highly trained in a range of care models, which allows them to adapt their practice to meet individual needs effectively. This flexibility ensures that children receive tailored support that promotes their emotional, social and educational growth.

The child enjoys a wide variety of activities, and photos displayed around the home evidence their engagement and enjoyment. Staff encourage children to pursue their passions and hobbies and are committed to providing new experiences. During their time in the home, children have enjoyed new experiences, such as borrowing books from the library, going on their first holiday, visiting the theatre and receiving their first bouquet of flowers. These experiences enrich children's lives and build confidence.

Children's views are actively sought, and they are fully involved in decisions about their care, changes to the home environment and planning meals and activities. Staff confidently discuss sensitive subjects with children, encouraging them to ask questions and to broaden their understanding. These conversations help children to make sense of their feelings and behaviours, strengthen their self-esteem and develop a positive sense of identity. Children are supported to understand how their lived experiences have shaped who they are today.

Education is strongly promoted. Staff advocate fiercely for children's learning and encourage them to value education. For example, the child had not attended school for a significant period before moving to the home. Staff have worked sensitively and at the child's pace to re-engage them in education. The child's timetable is gradually increasing, and staff provide additional learning opportunities at the home. The child is now beginning to talk about future employment and the qualifications that they will need to achieve their goals.

The child's health and well-being are prioritised. The child is registered with a GP, dentist and optician, and staff ensure that they attend all appointments. Staff use creative approaches to promote healthy lifestyles, including daily visits to a dog shelter to walk rescue dogs, jogging and bike rides. These activities not only improve

physical fitness but also support the child's emotional well-being. Staff work collaboratively with a range of specialists to ensure that all health needs are met.

Families are overwhelmingly positive about the care and support provided. They describe the work of staff as transformative, highlighting the progress that their children have made. One family member said their child has grown in confidence and is beginning to believe in themselves again.

Admissions are managed with exceptional care and attention. The process is detailed and thoughtfully planned to meet each child's individual needs and with consideration of their lived experiences. Children are invited to visit the home and to meet staff before moving in, which helps them to feel welcomed and reassured. This meticulous planning ensures smooth transitions and provides confidence to families. Staff also maintain contact with children after they leave, offering outreach support so that children continue to feel valued and remembered.

The child lives in a warm and welcoming home, with access to books, puzzles and games that they enjoy. Staff decorate the living space to mark annual celebrations, and they are currently embracing Halloween festivities. The environment feels homely, although some institutional features remain, such as numerous fire door signs and kitchen knives stored in a secure cage. The manager acknowledges that these aspects detract from a fully homely atmosphere and is exploring possible solutions.

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

Staff know the child exceptionally well and have a thorough understanding of their risks and vulnerabilities. They work sensitively and proactively to help the child to understand these risks and to make safer choices. As a result, the child's risks are reducing significantly, and their ability to keep themselves safe is improving.

Children's plans are highly individualised, and risk assessments are comprehensive and detailed. This ensures that when children move on, their next placement has clear guidance on how best to support them. This promotes consistency and continuity of care, which is central to each child's progress and stability.

Safeguarding concerns are managed with the highest level of professionalism. Children are kept informed throughout the process and are updated on outcomes, which promotes transparency and trust. Leaders and managers undertake thorough reviews of all concerns, and learning from these reviews is swiftly implemented. These actions have strengthened safeguarding practice and enhanced staff's knowledge, ensuring that children remain safe.

Incidents of physical intervention remain extremely low. When intervention is necessary, it is only ever used as a last resort to protect the child from harm. Staff rely on their strong, positive relationships with children to de-escalate situations and

provide reassurance during times of distress. This approach significantly reduces the need for physical intervention and promotes emotional regulation. As a result, children are making exceptional progress in managing their emotions, reflecting on their behaviour and expressing their feelings more positively. Staff consistently go above and beyond to understand and respond to children's needs.

The child does not go missing from the home. This is because of the strong, trusting relationships that staff have built, which underpin the exceptional care provided. When previous children have gone missing, staff have responded promptly and effectively to ensure their safe return. They also work to understand the reasons behind the behaviour and to engage children in meaningful conversations about how they can be supported in the future.

Leaders and managers are committed to employing only the most suitable staff. Recruitment processes are robust and include an initial screening call with leaders and managers. This additional layer of scrutiny ensures that candidates are well suited to meet the needs of the child and uphold the home's high standards of care.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers provide inspirational and highly effective leadership. They demonstrate exceptional vision, innovation and forward-thinking practice that drives continuous improvement. Their child-centred approach is embedded throughout the service and is reflected in a highly skilled, resilient and deeply committed staff team. Leaders work collaboratively and consistently strive for excellence, ensuring that children receive the highest quality care and support.

The manager's oversight of the home is exemplary. She uses highly effective monitoring and review systems to maintain a clear and accurate understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. This enables her to implement robust action plans that secure sustained progress. Her commitment to improvement is relentless, and she ensures that the service continues to evolve to meet the needs of the child.

The manager is unwavering in her dedication to both the child and the staff team. She is a strong advocate for the child and confidently challenges decisions that do not align with the child's best interests. Her passion for the role inspires her team, which speaks with pride about the support that they receive. This exceptional leadership has contributed to very low staff turnover and a stable, highly motivated workforce. Staff describe feeling privileged to work under her guidance and credit her with creating a nurturing, homely environment where children thrive.

Staff development is prioritised and delivered to an exceptionally high standard. New staff benefit from comprehensive inductions that prepare them well for their roles. All staff receive annual appraisals and regular, reflective supervision sessions, which include constructive feedback to enhance practice. Clinical supervision, delivered by a qualified therapist, provides additional opportunities for staff to reflect and deepen

their understanding of children's needs. This approach ensures that staff are highly skilled and confident in meeting the child's complex needs.

The manager invests in continuous professional development for herself and for the team. Team meetings regularly feature guest speakers, including specialists in neurodiversity and equality and diversity. This bespoke training equips staff with specialist knowledge that they apply effectively in their work with the children. As a result, staff practice is informed, innovative and consistently meets the highest standards.

The team culture is exceptionally positive. Staff actively celebrate one another's achievements, fostering a strong sense of unity and morale. Certificates recognising individual strengths and collective celebrations of milestones, such as diploma completions, create an environment of mutual respect and encouragement.

The impact of this exceptional practice on children's experiences and progress is profound. Professionals consistently praise the team, describing their work as 'exceeding expectations'. One professional commented that the child is on a 'transformative journey' and is beginning to understand their self-worth. Professionals particularly value the team's strong communication and collaborative approach, which ensure that care planning is highly effective and responsive to the child's needs.

The local authority has recognised the home's outstanding practice and has shared it across its other children's homes. Key areas such as health and safety documentation, management oversight and systems for monitoring children's outcomes have been disseminated to strengthen practice elsewhere. This demonstrates the home's role as a model of excellence within the wider service.

On occasion, the independent person has not fully carried out their duties when conducting their monthly visits. At times, the visitor has not entered the home and has conducted one visit over the phone. Reports can be scarce in detail. Although leaders and managers have challenged this practice, this is a missed opportunity for the service to receive feedback on the care that it delivers to children. There has been minimal impact to the child, due to the effectiveness of the staff team caring for them.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure the independent person regularly makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care. The independent person must visit the home monthly and in person, ensuring the report produced as a result of the visit is fully detailed. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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: 1230411

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate RH2 8EF

Responsible individual: Rebecca Hanifan

Registered manager: Lucy Chambers

Inspector

Louise Webling, Social Care Inspector

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