

1236916

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in June 2016 and is privately owned. It provides care for up to three children.

The manager has been in post since the home registered.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home.

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

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

Date of last inspection: 26 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/09/2023	Full	Good
01/11/2022	Full	Good
21/02/2022	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The home environment is warm and cosy, with a range of soft furnishings. Framed photos are displayed of the children and staff. Children's bedrooms are personalised and are decorated to a high standard in line with their interests. The welcoming home gives children a sense of belonging and stability.

Staff interactions with children are kind, caring and fun. Staff join in activities with children that children enjoy, such as taking the dogs for a walk. Children engage in conversations with staff and benefit from positive encouragement and friendly/good-humoured interactions. Staff have built positive relationships with children, which means that children enjoy spending time with staff and feel relaxed and comfortable in their presence.

Children are supported by a consistent team of staff who have built trusting and secure relationships with them. Children talk positively of the home, and staff have a good understanding of children's history, experiences, likes and dislikes, so they understand their needs. Children have regular one-to-one sessions where they can express their views, wishes and feelings and be open with staff. The registered manager shares issues or views in regular team meetings so that all staff are kept informed. Advocates or mentors support children, so there are regular opportunities outside the home for children to speak to external professionals.

Staff support children with independence so that they make positive steps towards adulthood. Staff provide ongoing support and remain in contact with children when they move on from the home. Professionals say that there is effective communication and that staff prepare the children well for independence. Plans for moving children into and on from the home are robust and structured. When there are unforeseen circumstances, staff support children to help relieve any anxiety and to help them settle.

Professionals say that staff have high expectations for children and show commitment and support so that they can succeed. A professional commented that one child has made significant progress at the home and said, 'Staff really do go that extra mile.' Family time is promoted so that children can maintain positive relationships with the people who are important to them.

Staff create memory books for children to take with them when they leave the home. These serve as keepsakes of the memory's children share with each other and staff and include photos of the enjoyable times they have had and the variety of engaging learning and practical activities the children have taken part in.

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

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding processes and protocols and work closely with children to help them keep safe. Children are cared for by a stable and compassionate team of staff who provide a therapeutic and nurturing environment and give children daily opportunities to talk about their feelings and worries.

The use of physical intervention is minimal. However, during a recent incident, staff took appropriate and proportionate action to address a situation, when de-escalating techniques were not successful. Staff recognise and understand how to promote positive behaviour and set clear and consistent routines and boundaries to help children keep safe.

Staff understand children's behaviours and how to respond to any risks or harm. Risk assessment strategies are clear, so staff keep up to date and informed. Staff have effective working relationships with external professionals, who comment that when children go missing, staff support them to return home safely.

Staff spend time with children exploring risks and consequences and how they can keep safe out in the community. Staff understand that allowing children to explore and take risks is part of growing up, and they support children to develop their understanding and skills to help keep themselves safe.

Staff have developed effective professional networks, so there is close multi-agency working and support services to address risk-taking behaviour. Professionals say that the home is flexible and adapts to support children's needs.

Children live in a positive environment where they are supported to develop and progress, while taking manageable risks and learning from mistakes. Therefore, children feel valued, respected and have a sense of belonging.

Physical and emotional behaviour can sometimes be challenging, so staff use consequences to help children understand how they can respond differently. The staff use reparation work so that children learn how to make amends and face the consequences of their behaviour in a positive way.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of children and lead the team effectively to ensure children receive a high level of care. Staff speak with enthusiasm and care about children and show an excellent understanding of their needs. Staff recognise the progress children make with education, behaviour, engagement, personal hygiene and confidence, and celebrate these achievements.

Staff have skilfully built trusting relationships with children and children are well prepared for independence. For example, children have a key to the home, and they

stay home alone, which builds their sense of responsibility and maturity and develops their independence skills.

Leaders and managers support staff to undertake a range of training activities to help them meet children's needs. Staff described how the registered manager is 'supportive' and 'always has time for everyone'. Staff say they enjoy working at the home because it is a 'lovely, nurturing environment' and has a 'family feel'. Staff and children always cook and eat dinner together, and they watch television together in the evenings.

The registered manager shows a high level of dedication and commitment to children, which helps them to experience a positive family home and feel stable and secure. Leaders, managers and staff ensure children have positive and aspirational experiences in this home, the same as other children of a similar age. For example, children go on holidays with staff, older children can have driving lessons, and the manager and staff are ambitious in their attempts to provide children with love and care so that they benefit from positive and nurturing relationships.

Staff say that it does not feel like work and that they look forward to spending time with colleagues and children each day. They say that it has been an honour to see children grow. Staff are committed to their work with children and say that everyone 'knits' together. They say that they are 'one big, happy family'. This helps children to flourish and thrive.

Leaders have confidence in management and say that staff are competent and passionate about implementing the routines, boundaries and care that children need. An ethos of the home is to provide a strong family environment, where children are happy to live.

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: 1236916

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Unit 9, Wheatstone Court, Waterwells Business Park,
Davy Way, Gloucester GL2 2AQ

Responsible individual: Tracey Lane

Registered manager: Leon James

Inspectors

Emma Fryer, Social Care Inspector
Nicola Lownds, Social Care Inspector

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