

1268886

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Home Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in May 2018. The manager registered in December 2024 and is suitably qualified.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. Two children contributed their views to the inspection.

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 March 2025

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: 22 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/01/2024	Full	Outstanding
22/09/2022	Full	Good
26/01/2022	Full	Good
09/10/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children settle in well when they move into this home, and they make exceptional progress. They benefit from positive, trusting relationships with staff, who have a thorough understanding of their needs. One child has lived at the home for over four years. When children leave the home, staff support them well.

The registered manager and staff have high aspirations for all children's education, supporting them to attend and succeed. Staff celebrate children's efforts and achievements, which helps to raise their confidence and motivation. As a result, most children are making excellent progress. If children struggle with formal education, the home provides an enrichment programme which supports them to develop life skills. Staff also support children to gain work experience and employment. If children do not engage with this help, the home provides an in-house therapist who supports them in working through these issues.

Children's health and emotional well-being are well understood by staff, who work closely with the in-house therapist to address children's specific needs. The therapist provides individualised support, helping children work through personal challenges and to build emotional resilience. This has enabled children to reflect on their experiences and has led to positive outcomes, including improved self-esteem, with a positive outlook to the future.

Children enjoy positive and warm relationships with staff, who are attuned to their individual needs and wishes. One child said, 'The home really listens to me, and I can be my own person and the staff respects that.' Staff enable children to talk to about their worries, nurturing trusting relationships while carefully exploring difficult topics. As a result, children have made meaningful progress to understand and manage their feelings, which has created opportunities for them to thrive.

Staff regularly go the extra mile to support children. When children are upset, staff create safe spaces and opportunities for children to talk, which allows them to express their emotions openly and honestly. Staff's empathetic approach works well. Consequently, incidents of children becoming distressed or being in situations of physical or emotional risk are rare in the home because children feel supported and understood.

Staff actively encourage children to participate in a wide range of enjoyable activities. This includes supporting children with their personal hobbies, such as horse-riding or shopping in vintage shops. These opportunities contribute to children's overall enjoyment and personal growth.

Children's care plans are well informed by research-led models of care and assessment. Meticulous attention to detail ensures that children consistently get the care and support they need to thrive.

Children's views, wishes and feelings are well understood. There are a wide range of opportunities for children to share their views. These include one-to-one sessions, conversations with the registered manager, sessions with the in-house therapist and children's meetings. Children know how to make a complaint. When needed, children have been supported to share their views with relevant professionals outside the home. Children say that they feel heard by the adults caring for them. Children's feedback leads to positive changes in the home environment and to staff practice.

The home is a warm and nurturing environment where children can relax and enjoy quality time with staff and their peers. Having a pet hamster creates a sense of normality and comfort for the children, helping to foster a calming and family like atmosphere. Overall, the home is a family-like setting, reinforcing a sense of belonging and emotional security for children. Children are encouraged to decorate their own bedrooms. One child's room was personalised in a Victorian style, which enables them to express their personality and gives them a sense of ownership.

Children benefit from seeing their families and other people who are important to them. This is actively encouraged and supported by staff. A strength of this home is how staff successfully support and advocate for children having relationships with their family and loved ones. As a result, one child speaks to their family abroad every day. Having healthy family relationships provides children with a foundation of security, fostering emotional growth and resilience.

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

Safeguarding is a priority, and the registered manager has exceptionally high expectations of staff conduct. There is a culture of openness, which contributes to children's safety and their sense of security. Staff and managers are trained to identify and respond to risks and understand their responsibilities to raise concerns.

Risk management strategies are clearly outlined in children's risk assessments. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of each child's individual risks, needs and triggers. Risk assessments are updated regularly, both when an incident has occurred and when there are upcoming events that may unsettle children. Consequently, staff remain attuned and responsive to the risks for children. This helps staff to prevent risks from escalating. As a result, the number of incidents is kept low, which has increased children's safety and well-being. Staff are knowledgeable about how to positively respond to behaviours, to effect change and reduce risk. There is a culture of continuous learning for staff and children. Extensive debrief work is undertaken that underpins learning, and incident prevention analysis further informs staff about what children need to be safe.

When children are missing from the home, staff follow the protocols effectively. They provide children with ongoing support by making significant attempts to maintain contact. Staff and managers are proactive in encouraging children to return home. Children's relationships with staff are a key reason why children choose to return home.

Children's case records, including key-work sessions, reflect their everyday lives. They are meaningful and address children's risks, needs and experiences well. Key-work sessions are goal-orientated, with staff using these goals to reinforce positive behaviour. Children's wishes and feelings are listened to and respected, and the sessions are beneficial for them.

Positive behaviour from children is promoted and rewarded. As a result, the use of consequences is kept to a minimum and effective restorative work is undertaken. This approach supports children to have a positive experience of learning how to make amends for their mistakes.

Children have access to a therapist who they meet with regularly. Staff also benefit from regular consultations with the therapist. The sessions provide an excellent nurturing environment for learning that allows staff to reflect, have a greater understanding of children's behaviours and improve staff practice. The therapist is also involved in the recruitment of staff, to ensure that the right people are employed to work with children and that the values of the therapeutic approach are embedded in the culture of the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager provides consistently high-quality personalised care and is fiercely proud of the children's accomplishments. She places a high value on and appreciates the work of the stable and committed staff team, who support children's continuing success and positive outcomes. Staff give overwhelmingly positive feedback about the home and the support they receive.

Leaders and managers have effective oversight of the home. The registered manager's oversight and scrutiny are extremely thorough. She uses a range of reviewing and monitoring systems. This ensures that systems are in place to support good practice which benefits children. As a result, she has an exceptionally well-rounded view of the experiences of the children and the impact that the care is having on their outcomes.

The registered manager is proud of the work and accomplishments of the team. She seeks to ensure that staff are acknowledged by senior managers by nominating them for awards by the company that are recognised by the organisation and shared widely. This contributes to staff feeling valued and respected in their work.

The registered manager ensures that the therapeutic model is embedded in all aspects of the home's functions. This approach places a high importance on all professionals understanding children's perspectives and experiences. This means that the children's views are always at the centre of their care and included in their support plans.

Staff receive annual appraisals and regular supervision that is focused on children's individual needs and experiences. Supervision is also reflective, which further supports

staff's practice and development. This enables the registered manager to have oversight of staff performance and any areas for development.

Staff receive good-quality face-to-face training that is research based and relevant to children's particular needs. Staff work as a team to embed this training in their everyday practice. This ensures that staff have the knowledge, skills and ability to understand and respond to the children's complex needs.

Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. Staff discuss relevant topics, such as the children's presenting needs and safeguarding issues, enabling them to respond to specific behaviours and needs as they arise. Staff also receive effective support and challenge in team meetings, which include reflective sessions with the in-house therapist. These sessions encourage staff to explore how their own feelings may maybe affected by the children's feelings, giving staff a deeper understanding of children's deep-rooted feelings and experiences. This enables staff to reflect on their practice, share learning and develop practice that benefits the children in their care.

The registered manager, deputy manager and staff work closely with children's families and professionals who work with them. Feedback from professionals is positive about the leadership and management of the home. One social worker said, 'The registered manager and the staff are professional, supportive, engaging and really go the extra mile for the children. They are proactive in supporting the children and meeting their needs. The placement also provides other activities for the children like horse-riding and outings. The trip to South Africa was a highlight for the children.'

No requirements or recommendations have been made at this inspection.

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: 1268886

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Home Limited

Registered provider address: Abacus House, Forest Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1DX

Responsible individual: Carmel Willis

Registered manager: Emma McLaven

Inspector

Sadia Akhtar, 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 2025