

1268886

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Services Ltd

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 who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in May 2018. The registered manager left in October 2023. The new manager took over immediately and has applied to register with Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home. The inspectors spoke with two children.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 January 2024

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: 22 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/09/2022	Full	Good
26/01/2022	Full	Good
09/10/2019	Full	Good
20/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children settle in this home and they make exceptional progress. This stability gives children a sense of belonging. One child has lived at the home for over three years. When children leave the home to move into new accommodation, staff support them well. Some children move into supported accommodation run by the same provider. This gives children the benefit of being in touch with staff who they are familiar with and enables their move from the home to be a positive experience. Furthermore, children often stay in touch with staff once they have left the home.

Social workers are positive about the support managers and staff give children. They say that they see noticeable improvements in the children's behaviour and children are settled in the home.

Managers and staff strongly advocate for children to attend the right educational provision. They work in partnership with teachers and the virtual school to ensure that children's educational needs are met. For example, staff successfully advocated for a child to return to school when they had been excluded. The school allowed the child to return, with a robust support plan that supported the child to engage with education. The actions of staff and managers support children to achieve their full potential. If children struggle with formal education, the home provides an enrichment programme which supports children 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 are supported to express their wishes and feelings and know that they will be listened to. They know how to make a complaint and their complaints are taken seriously. Children are confident in expressing their views to staff. The home promotes a culture of respect and empathy towards children, which contributes to their growing confidence and positive self-identity.

Children's views are central to the running of the home. Leaders, managers and staff consult with children about all aspects of their care and support them to take increasing control of decisions that affect them. Children's feedback leads to positive changes in the home environment and practice. Children have the benefit of an in-house therapist who they meet with regularly. The therapist also supports leaders and managers including in the recruitment of suitable staff. This ensures that the values of therapeutic support for children are becoming embedded in the culture of the home.

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

Staff know children extremely well. They have close and nurturing relationships with children. As a result, children feel able to share their worries and concerns.

Risk management plans are highly effective because staff complete them with children. This gives staff a real understanding of the child's own understanding about risk. Staff follow the risk management plans and, consequently, children are well supported and are protected. Staff are responsive and they place children at the centre of their practice, while supporting them in developing the skills to keep themselves safe.

Staff are professionally curious and constantly vigilant about any new or emerging risks. They quickly share any safeguarding concerns and 'soft intelligence' with the relevant agencies, including the police. They participate in multi-agency meetings and implement agreed strategies. As a result of this excellent multi-agency approach, children are safer. If children are at serious risk of harm, staff take decisive action to keep them safe. For example, when the risks in the community increased for one child, managers and staff worked effectively with partner agencies to keep the child safe and supported them to move out of the area. The organisation continued to care for the child in an alternative home and continued to educate them about the ongoing risk by providing a mentor.

Incidents of physical restraint are extremely rare. This is because of the strength of the relationships between the children and staff. Open and honest communication means that children can discuss their feelings, which helps staff to de-escalate potential conflicts and respond compassionately.

Staff benefit from regular consultations with the in-house therapist. Group sessions with the therapist are effective and improve staff practice. The sessions provide an excellent nurturing environment for learning that allows staff to reflect and have a greater understanding of children's behaviours.

Staff manage inappropriate behaviour through natural consequences. This helps children to take responsibility and learn from their behaviour, as well as understanding how to stay safe. Through providing consistent boundaries, staff show that they care for children. Their practice embodies empathy and compassion, with one child saying, 'I know they love me.'

Staff treat children with dignity and respect. Children's positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded by staff. Children thrive in this home and know that, no matter what their behaviour, staff will be there for them.

If children are missing from the home, staff follow the missing-from-care protocols effectively. They provide children with ongoing support by making significant attempts on a daily basis to maintain contact. They also contact people who may know the child's whereabouts, such as friends and relatives. Staff and managers are

proactive and encourage children to return home. Children's relationships with staff are a key reason why children choose to return home.

Managers ensure that they fully understand children's needs before they move into the home. They consider the needs of the children already living in the home to make sure that children can live safely together. As a result, children have positive experiences and live in the home for a long time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are inspirational and ambitious for children. They are committed and influential in changing the lives of those in their care. There are plans to further develop the service and therapeutic approach used in the home.

Leaders and managers recognise the importance of relationships. The manager works tirelessly to build trusting relationships with children and to provide them with a sense of security. There have been some recent challenges due to staff sickness and staff moving on for their career progression. Despite this, staff have worked together to ensure that children continue to receive consistent care. Children are thriving because of the consistent care they receive and the positive relationships they have with staff.

Staff morale is good. The staff team is passionate about providing high-quality care and are motivated. Staff find the manager personable and approachable. They say that they benefit from her ongoing support and that the outstanding practice in the home supports improved outcomes for children.

Leaders and managers have effective oversight of the home. The manager uses a range of reviewing and monitoring systems. This ensures that systems are in place to support good practice which benefits children.

Staff receive regular and effective supervision which is child-focused. This offers opportunities for learning and supports staff to provide good-quality care for children.

Leaders and managers know children well. Careful thought is put into developing bespoke, individualised plans which help staff support children. The manager has developed excellent relationships with partner agencies, which ensures that children's needs are met effectively.

Leaders and managers have a workforce development plan that demonstrates how staff are supported, developed and trained to work effectively with children. The staff team contributes to this vision, which can lead to further improvements in the care children receive.

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. They consistently implement boundaries with children and

promote positive behaviour. They have conversations with children which support them in exploring more positive ways of behaving. As a result, children's complex behaviours reduce and they can better regulate their emotions, contributing to their greater happiness and stability.

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 Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Cooper Paul, 14-18 Forest Road, Loughton IG10 1DX

Responsible individual: Carmel Willis

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspectors

Angela Reid, Social Care Inspector
Leanne Grant, Social Care Inspector

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