

1269072

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for three children up to the age of 18 with social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2021 and is suitably qualified.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 July 2023

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

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/08/2021	Full	Good
09/12/2019	Full	Good
25/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children develop close and trusting relationships with those who care for them. This is because the manager and staff team are nurturing and reflective. They go out of their way to spend time and work closely with the children to help them to share their thoughts and feelings. One child described the team as 'like my family'. As a result, children have a good sense of belonging and develop in self-confidence.

Children regularly attend school and college. Even when children experience considerable challenges within a school environment, they make progress in education. This is due to the significant support given to children from the manager and staff in the home.

Managers and staff support children well. They provide good opportunities to enable children to develop independence skills. As a result, children are well prepared for adult life. One child has bought a significant amount of household items ready for when she moves into her own accommodation. This has been encouraged and supported by staff. Her pathway adviser stated, 'Staff are doing everything in their power to support her in this journey as she approaches her 18th birthday.'

The manager and staff spend a considerable amount of time developing positive relationships with birth families. This has also included taking on the roles and tasks of other professionals to bring about positive changes for children. As a result, children are supported to develop their identity and a sense of permanency.

There are clear and detailed transition plans for when children move out of the home. Children and their families are fully involved to ensure that this is a positive and successful move.

The home is a comfortable place for children to live and is furnished to a high standard. The manager is considering plans to introduce more photos and pictures in communal areas now that the home has been decorated. The children's bathroom is tired and in need of attention. Children's bedrooms are of a good size and personalised to their individual tastes. This helps children to settle in the home and develop a sense of self-worth.

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

Children do not go missing from the home or put themselves at risk.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding. This is reinforced by a range of risk assessments that are implemented well to ensure that children are safeguarded.

Staff discuss relevant topics with children to help them to understand the world around them and how to keep safe.

The home has a location risk assessment that is regularly reviewed by managers. However, this not wholly effective as this does not include all risks associated with the nearby town or include feedback from relevant people.

Staff spend time developing strong and trusting relationships with the children they care for to bring about desired behaviour. Effective use of positive incentives helps to ensure that positive behaviour is reinforced. As a result, there have been no incidents requiring staff to physically restrain children.

Staff recruitment procedures are thorough. This helps to ensure that staff working at the home are suitable to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has high expectations for children. She has a clear vision for improvement and how this will be achieved. The staff team is established and well qualified. There has been a long and well-considered handover period for the new manager who is due to take over the running of the home in August. This is helping to provide consistency and continuity of care for children.

The manager has good oversight into the running of the home. This ensures that she knows and understands the home's strengths and weaknesses well, taking effective action when needed.

The manager and staff team are child-focused and share a clear ethos within the home. Staff are motivated. They receive a good level of supervision that supports their development.

Staff receive a wide range of training opportunities to meet the needs of the children. The manager makes good use of team meetings to further support staff practice, bringing in external professionals when needed to support this.

The manager has developed effective working relationships with placing social workers and other external professionals. Placing social workers, teachers and others are overwhelmingly positive about the home and the quality of care given to the children. They cite the significant support staff provide as being instrumental to the progress children are making.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming. In particular, to finalise and implement plans to introduce pictures and photos now that the home has been redecorated. In addition, to address issues identified in the bathroom. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)
- The registered person should review the appropriateness and suitability of the location and premises of the home at least once a year. The review should include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)

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: 1269072

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Tracey Lane

Registered manager: Carleen Dobson

Inspectors

Suzanne Young, Social Care Inspector

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