

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 is privately owned. It provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. The home was registered on 5 July 2018.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 August 2025

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: 20 November 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/11/2024	Full	Good
04/07/2023	Full	Good
04/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
10/08/2021	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Since the previous inspection, three children have moved into the home and three have moved out. During the inspection, the inspector spoke with all children currently residing in the home.

The home environment is welcoming and has a homely feel. It is well maintained and provides a variety of spaces for children to relax and play. The large garden is equipped with a playhouse, trampoline, paddling pool and swing, offering children opportunities for outdoor recreation. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in line with their individual preferences.

Admissions to the home have taken place quickly. However, staff have made efforts to meet children in advance, which has supported children to settle more easily. When children have moved out of the home, transitions have been well organised and child-focused, helping children to adjust to their new environments.

Children enjoy positive relationships with the adults who care for them. They are able to identify trusted staff and feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Clear and consistent boundaries help children feel safe. Staff support children to develop strategies to manage difficult emotions and behaviours.

Children are making progress in their education. Professionals attribute this to the stability and consistency they experience in the home. Staff work collaboratively with education providers to promote children's engagement in learning. One child who recently completed their exams is being supported to explore post-16 options. When the child has found this process challenging, staff have remained patient, supportive and available.

Children are supported to maintain good health. Staff help children to access local health services for both routine and specialist appointments. They understand the impact of adverse life experiences on children's mental health and advocate strongly on their behalf. On one occasion, staff challenged decisions made by external health professionals when a child's needs had not been fully assessed. This led to a review of the decision and a more appropriate outcome for the child.

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

Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know the children well and have a good awareness of their individual needs and associated risks. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated when new information becomes available. The manager and staff team work effectively with external professionals, including social workers and teachers, to ensure that children's needs are consistently met.

Staff are alert to the risks associated with online safety. The introduction of an 'online champion' role has strengthened staff knowledge and awareness of the dangers posed by digital platforms. This proactive approach enables the team to stay informed about emerging risks and implement preventative measures to safeguard children.

Allegations made by children are responded to promptly by leaders and managers. Relevant safeguarding agencies are notified, and records of such incidents are detailed and thorough. Where necessary, disciplinary action is taken, and appropriate support is provided to both children and staff involved.

All staff are trained in the use of physical restraint, although it is rarely required. Staff rely on the strength of their relationships with children to help them regulate their emotions and calm down when distressed. Staff use professional curiosity to explore the underlying causes of behaviour, which informs reflective practice and helps to reduce future risks.

Medication is managed safely and effectively. Staff receive training during their induction on the safe storage and administration of medicines. There have been no recorded errors since the last inspection.

Recruitment practices are robust and thorough, ensuring that staff are suitably qualified and safe to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a suitably qualified and experienced manager, who advocates strongly on behalf of children and maintains high aspirations for their progress and well-being. He leads by example and is fostering a positive and child-focused culture within the staff team. The manager is supported by a responsible individual who is committed to delivering high-quality care. During a recent change in the home's management, she increased her presence and availability, which helped to provide continuity and reassurance for children and staff during a period of transition.

Leaders and managers maintain excellent oversight of the home. Effective monitoring systems enable shortfalls to be identified and addressed promptly, ensuring that the quality of care remains consistently high.

Staff report high levels of job satisfaction and morale. They work collaboratively and feel well supported by leaders and managers. Staff are confident in their roles and receive training that equips them with the skills and knowledge needed to care for children effectively. When a child expressed uncertainty about their gender identity, staff received training from a specialist service. This enhanced their understanding of the child's individual experience and enabled them to provide more informed and sensitive support.

Feedback from professionals and family members indicates that children receive good care and are happy living in the home. However, when changes in management have occurred, parents have not always been informed in a timely manner. This has the potential to hinder the development of positive relationships between the home and families.

Staff receive regular supervision from senior team members. These sessions are used to reflect on practice, support professional development and promote learning. Leaders and managers recognise the emotional demands of the role and provide appropriate support to staff. Team meetings are held regularly and are well attended.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should oversee the welfare of the children in their care through observation and engagement with: each child; the home's staff; each child's family/carers where appropriate; and professionals involved in the care or protection of each child including their social worker, independent reviewing officer, teachers, clinicians and other health professionals etc. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.23)

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: Duncan Woodger, Unit 9, Wheatstone Court, Davy Way, Waterwells Business Park, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 2AQ

Responsible individual: Carleen Dobson

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Becky Rutter, Social Care Inspector

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