

2626458

Registered provider: Orchard Children Homes Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to three children with social and emotional difficulties. The manager is appropriately qualified and is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 February 2025

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 November 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/11/2023	Full	Good
13/09/2022	Full	Good
16/02/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

At the time of the inspection, three children were living in the home. Since the last inspection no children have moved in, and no children have moved out. All the children living in the home have lived there for between two and four years.

The home is a pleasant and welcoming environment. There are areas for children to enjoy and play. The walls are adorned with photos of the children enjoying holidays and activities with staff. One room is being developed into a sensory space for the children to relax in. Children's bedrooms are personalised, reflecting their interests and ideas. Staff listen to children's suggestions about how to develop areas of the home.

Staff know the children well. They provide responsive and attuned care that is respectful of children's histories, needs and life experiences. For example, when a child experienced a bereavement, the manager swiftly arranged for all staff to undertake grief and loss training to be able to support the child effectively. Children have a strong sense of safety and belonging. They feel cared for and loved by staff.

Staff are dedicated in their practice. They are motivated and resourceful. This is reflected in comments from external professionals and family members. An external clinical professional working with the manager and staff has expressed the wish to share examples of the excellent practice they have observed to a wider audience.

Staff have high aspirations for children and take pride in their achievements. Children have made exceptional progress in their engagement with and achievement in education while living in the home. External professionals identify how settled the children are in their education provisions and how they have made significant progress from their starting points.

There is evidence of sustained improvement in children's lives even when they encounter challenges. For example, one child was distressed after learning about a change in their family's circumstances and displayed behaviour that presented as a challenge to staff. Staff supported the child with empathy and consistency. The child was receptive to support due to having strong relationships with staff.

Children are encouraged to participate in activities and interests of their choosing. These form a regular part of their weekly routine. Staff enjoy seeing the children thrive as they encounter new experiences. Opportunities are explored when children say that they want to do something specific, for example try new hobbies or go on holiday abroad.

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

The registered manager and staff understand their safeguarding role and responsibilities. Proactive safeguarding practice means that risks are identified in their early stages and effective responses coordinated. In one example, regular checks on a child's phone identified messages of a concerning nature. This led to prompt action being taken to safeguard the child.

When safeguarding incidents have occurred, the welfare of children is prioritised. Staff are committed to attending to children's ongoing emotional well-being. Staff and managers are confident to advocate for appropriate support for the child until this need is met. For example, when a child did not meet the criteria for a service from a mental health team, the manager attained funding for 12 months of therapeutic support from a different provider.

When children have gone missing from the home, staff have followed procedures without delay. The appropriate authorities are informed, and debriefs are undertaken within timescales. Staff use professional curiosity with children to understand the reasons for their behaviour and to support them. One child went missing after attending a prearranged activity with friends. The child later said they wanted more free time to see friends. Staff proactively explored this with the child and their social worker, achieving a positive outcome for the child.

Highly effective planning around risk and safety has contributed to improvement in children's lives. Staff are cognisant of risks within and outside of the home and risk assessments are updated accordingly. This knowledge actively informs preparation for children's post-18 plans.

Staff are extremely child focused and invest considerable time with children to support them to flourish. Children receive clear and consistent structure and boundaries from staff. Rules and boundaries reflect children's ages and understanding. Staff are resourceful and creative in their use of behaviour management strategies, with a strong focus on de-escalation techniques that are individual to children's needs. When one child was upset about his family, a staff member took him for a walk in the countryside, which helped the child to calm down.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Monitoring systems are comprehensive and enable the manager to have good oversight of the home. Where there are shortfalls, of which there are few, these are promptly rectified. Rigorous recruitment checks ensure employment of a suitable and safe workforce. The manager is meticulous in her efforts to record information and has created timelines to capture information chronologically. This has been effective mechanism when there has been a need to challenge the local authority on delays in decision-making for children.

The manager has high aspirations for their team. They celebrate the achievements of staff and are dedicated to creating a culture of support and collaboration. In team meetings, staff members each can recognise a colleague for their hard work and provide positive feedback for the staff member with the most recognition. The manager also identifies a staff member to acknowledge their positive practice. These incentives boost morale and commitment.

The manager is exceptionally dedicated to their role and highly respected by their team. They are inspiring and proactive. Staff describe them as supportive, motivational and someone who listens to staff and children. An external professional remarked that the manager's leadership skills are exemplary. The manager is an excellent advocate for children and is not reluctant to escalate matters when they need to ensure children's needs are met.

Staff are provided with regular supervision. This entails reflection on practice and a focus on development and well-being. Additionally, leaders and managers have arranged for a clinical practitioner to provide regular consultations with staff. This encourages staff to engage in exploration of the emotions that underpin children's expressed behaviours. This enhances the team's understanding of children's needs.

The induction of new staff is thorough and purposeful. Leaders and managers have devised a training programme that offers new employees a strong foundation. Value is placed on the need for staff to build trusting relationships with children. Managers create opportunities for children and staff to spend quality time together. This helps children to feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

The staff team is stable and staff enjoy working at the home. They are enthusiastic and motivated. Children enjoy spending time with them and seek their company at times of uncertainty. For example, a child who was feeling unwell was observed during the inspection to sit close to the manager and take comfort from the verbal reassurance given.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that children are able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

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: 2626458

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Orchard Children Homes Ltd

Registered provider address: 2nd Floor, 118 Calais Road, Burton-on-Trent DE13 0UW

Responsible individual: Keren Iqbal

Registered manager: Rachael Nally

Inspector

Becky Rutter, Social Care Inspector

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