

2626773

Registered provider: Hertfordshire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care for up to 3 children. Children have a range of highly complex needs and cannot be placed in mainstream care settings at the time of admission. These include significant trauma, mental-health needs, risk of exploitation, significant attachment issues and associated challenging behaviour.

The home consists of 3 bungalows which each provide solo accommodation for a child. This comprises of one short-term placement where children stay for up to 8 weeks, and 2 long-term placements.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 May 2026

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 January 2026

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
20/01/2026	Full	Requires improvement to be good
21/01/2025	Full	Outstanding
31/01/2024	Full	Good
01/02/2023	Full	Good

Summary of findings

The home has made changes since the last inspection and addressed most of the previous shortfalls. This includes improvements in building relationships between staff and children, and children moving in or leaving the home. There are several examples of excellent practice including the quality of some written records, and the embedding of the therapeutic approach. However, some shortfalls, in relation to management oversight of some incidents, capturing children's feedback and views and ensuring regularly staff supervision.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the time of this inspection, 3 children were living in the home. Since the last inspection, 2 children had short-term stays at the home, and one child moved out. Children's experiences and progress are mixed. However, children are making measurable and meaningful progress from their individual starting points.

There have been positive outcomes for some children. One child was successfully supported to return to their family. Another moved on to a more appropriate long-term placement following a planned move.. One placement ended due to the staff being unable to meet the child's needs. Staff supported the ending by staying in touch and visiting the child following their move. This shows a commitment to children.

Children have trusting relationships with staff. They are listened to and their views are consistently sought through weekly meetings and daily interactions.. The therapeutic model is well embedded in practice. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of this approach and use it effectively to inform children's care, with interventions clearly recorded.

Children's education is prioritised. Most children have experienced disruption in their education, and staff work closely with education provisions and the headteacher of the virtual school, enabling swift identification of suitable provisions. This helps children to engage with education and begin to make academic progress.

Children's health and wellbeing needs are well met. Staff respond effectively to both physical and emotional health needs, including complex mental health and neurodiversity diagnoses. Emotional wellbeing needs are also well supported. Staff and managers work collaboratively with health professionals to secure appropriate assessments and interventions.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that are tailored to their individual preferences. Structured weekly plans support both active and more relaxed interests. This helps children to develop their identity, social skills and positive routines.

Staff and managers work effectively with families and professionals. Family time is actively supported and flexible, ensuring children maintain important relationships. Feedback from families and professionals is positive and confirms that children are well supported.

The home is warm, well maintained and personalised. As well as choosing decor, one child was able to bring two pets into the home. Children benefit from living in individual provisions in the wider setting, which encourages a sense of independence. Adaptations are made when necessary to reduce risks, including those associated with self-harm, ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

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

Children are safeguarded effectively. Staff have a clear understanding of each child's risks and vulnerabilities. They recognise triggers and respond appropriately, using strategies which help to de-escalate situations and support children safely.

Behaviour is managed through a consistent, nurturing and therapeutic approach. Staff strive to build positive relationships with children through respectful communication. Care plans and risk assessments are detailed, regularly reviewed and reflect children's individual needs. This contributes to reducing risk and encouraging safer behaviours.

When children go missing from the home, staff respond promptly and follow established procedures. Records are detailed and up to date. Managers work well with partner agencies to reduce risk and identify strategies to minimise the frequency of incidents.

Staff respond appropriately to incidents of self-harm, including complex or high-risk behaviours. The use of a structured 24-hour safety plan supports staff to respond effectively during periods of heightened risk. Staff remain vigilant to warning signs and seek specialist support when required. These measures have contributed to reducing both the frequency and impact of self-harm behaviours for most children.

Health and safety risks are monitored and managed effectively. Routine checks and fire safety procedures such as fire drills are carried out regularly, ensuring that the environment remains safe for children.

Physical intervention is used appropriately as a last resort. These measures are justified and proportionate. Records of incidents are detailed, however, management oversight of these incidents is not sufficiently reflective and records do not consistently demonstrate evaluation or learning. Children's views following incidents are not always clearly captured. This limits opportunities for reflection and improvement in practice.

The home responds appropriately to serious incidents. However, on at least two occasions, serious incidents were not notified to Ofsted as required. This limits external oversight and scrutiny.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by a suitably experienced and registered manager. The manager is supported by a capable deputy manager and a responsible individual. Combined they work well as a leadership team. They demonstrate a strong commitment to improving children's experiences and outcomes.

Leaders create a positive and supportive culture. Staff speak highly of managers and value the support and guidance that they receive. The team works collaboratively and demonstrates a shared commitment to providing high-quality care. Regular team meetings and reflective meetings provide opportunities for learning, development and strengthening staff practice.

Staff receive a comprehensive induction and access to a wide range of training. This equips them with the skills needed to care for children with complex needs. Leaders are proactive in identifying additional training to meet the needs of individual children.

Safer recruitment processes are followed. Appropriate employment checks, , are in place for all staff, including agency workers.

Most staff have regular supervision. However, there are gaps in supervision records. Some supervision sessions lack sufficient detail and are not consistently signed. This reduces oversight of staff practice and development.

Monitoring systems are generally effective, and leaders have a good understanding of day-to-day practice. However, some documents are not regularly updated, including the statement of purpose and local area risk assessment. In addition, end-of-placement summaries do not consistently evaluate children's progress and outcomes. This limits leaders' ability to fully review the impact of care provided.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(f)((h))	30 July 2026

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. Children should be offered the opportunity to access an advocacy support to help them with this. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person should ensure that a note of the content and/or outcomes of supervision sessions is kept and to ensure that both the person giving the supervision and staff member have a copy of the record. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 13.4)
- The registered person should notify the regulator and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs. Incidents that are likely to be considered serious affecting the welfare of a child include; a serious illness or accident; a serious incident of self-harm, or serious concerns over a child's missing behaviour, particularly where the child is considered to be at grave risk due to age or

vulnerability or where they have been missing for a considerable period of time and their whereabouts is unknown ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraphs 14.10 and 14.11)

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: 2626773

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Hertfordshire County Council

Registered provider address: Farnham House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage SG1 2ST

Responsible individual: Miranda Kumar

Registered manager: Christopher Davis

Inspector

Daniel Rankin, Social Care Inspector

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