

2661346

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Services Limited

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 four children aged between 11 and 17 who have social and emotional needs. It is one of three homes run by Woodford Children's Services Ltd., and part of a commissioning partnership contract with eight local authorities.

A suitably qualified and experienced registered manager has been in post since June 2023.

There were four children living in the home at the time of this inspection.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

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

Date of last inspection: 8 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/09/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children's well-being, development and relationships are at the centre of the home's ethos. The staff build meaningful, warm relationships that enable children to trust their carers so that they make good, steady progress from their starting points. Children talk positively about the care they receive. They are comfortable talking to staff and they feel safe in the home.

The staff are ambitious for children, ensuring that they achieve their potential. Some children come to the home having struggled with school, and they re-engage in education because of the care and tenacity of staff. A headteacher has given positive feedback about the support that children receive at the home and the staff being ambitious about what children can achieve. This allows children to progress positively in school.

Where children are not in full-time school, enrichment activities are regularly in place, with a relentless focus on accessing mainstream and alternative learning opportunities. This means children can consider their options and feel better about their future prospects of gaining employment.

Key-worker sessions take place regularly. Staff work closely with children, helping them to understand their worlds and to live in a settled home environment. Where children have health needs, bespoke provision is provided, for example having access to and information about sexual health matters.

Staff at the home identify and thoughtfully promote children's religious, cultural and identity needs. Children are able to discuss the food they would like and can cook food with the support of staff. This helps children to learn life skills and develop their independence.

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

Staff have a good understanding of the home's safeguarding policies. They attend regular and wide-ranging training, so they are up to date with developments in childcare practice. Staff meetings take place routinely, addressing safeguarding topics, and giving updates on children's care plans and reminders to read relevant policies. This helps the home run smoothly, with children's needs understood well.

All staff understand whistleblowing procedures.

Comprehensive behaviour support plans help staff support children, so that physical intervention is a last resort.

Children feel safe in the home, and this allows them to build trusting relationships with staff members, who they get along with well. The staff know what to do when a young person goes missing from care. However, one young person has reported not feeling supported to return to the home following a missing-from-care episode. Staff hold stability meetings when a child has missing-from-care episodes. However, multi-agency strategy meetings to share information and support safety planning are not always in place when risks escalate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The energetic and responsive registered manager is supported by a 'hands on' responsible individual, with oversight provided by the Director of Woodford Children's Services. Leaders and managers are ambitious and child centred. They employ staff who are caring and nurturing and lead them to provide effective care, stability and a settled home environment for children. Leaders know the children well and develop warm relationships to which they respond positively.

Effective leadership, good training and good pathways for career progression are ensuring that permanent, consistent staffing is in place for children despite the national pressures on the recruitment of residential care workers. Leaders consider staff health and well-being and ensure that staffing is sufficient to support effective care.

Appropriate training and supervision ensure that new staff complete a thorough period of probation. Working together as a staff team is embodied in the systemic and relationship-based ethos described in the statement of purpose. The staff team works together, focusing on the children, in a calm, fun and interactive environment. This relationship-based approach supports children's progress.

Progress has been made since the last inspection. However, further work is needed to ensure that records tell the story of the child's journey, include the information about health and childcare reviews, and catalogue the involvement of multi-agency partners and social workers.

Feedback from professionals, parents and children is overwhelmingly positive, emphasising the successful progress made by children who have experienced disruption and trauma in their earlier lives.

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
In meeting the quality standards, the registered person must, and must ensure that staff— if the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's or a relevant person's performance or response to be inadequate in relation to their role, challenge the placing authority or the relevant person to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met in accordance with the child's relevant plans; and seek to develop and maintain effective professional relationships with such persons, bodies or organisations as the registered person considers appropriate having regard to the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation. (Regulation 5(c)(d)) In particular, leaders and managers should advocate proactively for children who go missing from care and provide challenge to help ensure that multi-agency strategy meetings take place when risks escalate.	01/4/2024

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that records are kept more efficiently and organised in ways that allow for easy access and monitoring. ('Guide to Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 14.2)

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: 2661346

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Woodford Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Abacus House, 14–18 Forest Road, Loughton IG10 1DX

Responsible individual: Carmel Willis

Registered manager: Sheila Doherty

Inspectors

Naintara Khosla, Social Care Inspector

Jenny-ellen Scotland, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024