

2667615

Registered provider: Mercia Children Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private company operates this home. It provides care for up to four children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2023.

There are three children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 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: 3 January 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2024	Full	Good
13/12/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children have positive relationships with the staff supporting them. Children said that they can talk to staff if they have any worries. Each child has an individualised plan that provides guidance for staff to follow. Staff understand what the care plans and assessment contain, to safely support each child.

The manager and staff show children respect and have a good understanding of their life experiences. They use a nurturing approach to help children overcome their worries and anxieties. Children are supported to try new experiences and activities. All three children were observed to seek out staff during the inspection and there were positive interactions seen throughout.

Managers and staff seek children's views about their wishes and feelings. Staff encourage children to be involved in the decision-making processes about their care. This means children can positively influence their day-to-day care. When children do raise issues, managers feed back to children. This means children feel listened to and their views are valued.

Children's engagement in education and learning is good. All children have increased their education attendance, which helps to ensure that children will have the best chance of succeeding in later life.

Children are supported to develop their independence in line with their age and individual needs. Children who have left the home did so in a positive and planned way, in line with their individual plans.

Children's health and well-being are promoted. Managers and staff work well with healthcare professionals to ensure that each child's health needs are met. Staff support children to attend all routine health appointments. Staff will also seek specialist support when required.

Staff ensure that children have opportunities to have positive experiences and make happy memories. Staff support children to take part in a wide range of activities and to spend time with their friends.

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

Staff model a sensitive and nurturing approach to supporting children and this style is embedded throughout their practice. For example, staff use curiosity and reflection with children to help them to consider the triggers for their behaviour. This helps children to develop coping skills and reduces behavioural incidents.

Children can talk to several trusted adults in the home about any concerns they have, and this promotes an environment of safety and security for them. Children are supported by staff to take age-appropriate risks according to their age and individual care needs.

Staff know the children very well. They have a good understanding of children's risks and vulnerabilities. Children's risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated by the manager and staff.

Incidents of children being physically held are very rare. When incidents occur, staff manage these well. They use strategies that require minimal physical intervention. The manager has oversight of all incidents and provides opportunities for staff and children to reflect and learn from incidents.

There are clear and consistent boundaries for staff to follow in the children's day-to-day plans. These are reviewed and agreed in team meetings, professional discussions and in consultation with children. Daily logs also relay important information to direct the staff to any new strategies.

Positive recognition and praise outweigh negative consequences. Staff support children to reflect on their behaviour and the choices they make. This approach is restorative and helps the children take responsibility for their actions. The manager evaluates consequences, ensuring that they are proportionate and restorative.

There is a robust process in place to ensure that the people who work with children are checked and vetted before working in the home. This safer recruitment process means that those who are employed are assessed as suitable to work with children. New staff undertake a structured induction and receive ongoing training related to their role.

The staffing at the home is stable. This promotes a sense of confidence for the children. There are two new staff members currently progressing through their induction process. They were both positive about the support they receive.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has good oversight of children's progress. However, the manager and staff do not always record feedback to the children and document work that has been completed. This is a missed opportunity to reflect on all the work taking place.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the home. However, this could be strengthened with more rigorous monitoring and reports from the independent person. This process does not enable leaders and managers to identify and address areas for development.

Partnership working with professionals is a key strength of the manager and staff team. Feedback from professionals is positive. One independent reviewing officer said, '[Child's name] is thriving, and this is an incredible achievement which is down to her

determination and tenacity, but could not have been achieved without the scaffolding and support from the home.'

Although staff have some opportunities for ad hoc supervision and attend team meetings regularly, the frequency, consistency and structure of supervision sessions do not meet regulatory standards. As a result, staff do not have consistent opportunities to reflect on their practice, address areas of concern in a timely manner and ensure that the strategies implemented for children's support are effective.

The lack of regular and formal appraisals also impacts on the manager's ability to monitor staff development, set clear performance goals and ensure staff's ongoing professional growth.

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 registered person must ensure— ensure that each employee completes an appropriate induction. The registered person must ensure that all employees— undertake appropriate continuing professional development; receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (1)(a) (4)(a)(b)(c)) This particularly refers to supervision of staff taking place regularly and being reflective and supportive.	3 March 2025

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: 2667615

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Mercia Children Services Limited

Registered provider address: Windsor House, Bayshill Road, Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire GL50 3AT

Responsible individual: Michael Lloyd

Registered manager: Collette Gedman

Inspectors

Mathew Morris-Jones, Social Care Inspector
Nicola Shaw, Social Care Inspector

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