

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 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2025.

The inspector spoke with all 3 children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 February 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: 21 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/01/2025	Full	Good
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

Children benefit from warm, trusting relationships with staff, which underpin their positive experiences and strong progress. Staff know children well, listen to them, and provide consistent support that helps them feel secure, settle quickly, and achieve across all areas of their lives.

Children make good educational progress. Children who were previously out of school or at risk of exclusion now attend regularly and enjoy learning. Two children have successfully moved from secondary school to full-time college. Staff arrange practical support such as bursaries, travel passes and mentoring which helps children stay engaged. As a result, children participate fully in education and work towards ambitious goals for their future.

Staff support children well with their health needs. Staff ensure attendance at appointments, act quickly when issues arise, and work with professionals to update the children's immunisations. Children access annual health reviews and specialist services. When a child declines to attend an appointment, staff find alternative ways to secure the required support. This provides consistent help for children's physical and emotional health

Children actively participate in decisions about their lives. Staff ensure that children have a voice and choice in their lives. Children meet with staff weekly to reflect on their week, share how they are feeling and raise any concerns. Children choose meals for the following week and plan family time and activities both inside and outside the home.

Children experience well-planned, needs-led transitions. Staff advocate strongly so that moves happen only when children feel ready. Staff helped to prepare a child's new home and held meetings there to increase the child's involvement. Senior leaders waived the fees to support the child's decision to move in January 2026. As a result, the child moved at their own pace, enjoyed Christmas with peers and staff, and settled well into independence.

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

Children take age-appropriate risks that help them develop safely and confidently. Staff listen to what matters to children and work alongside them to create plans that encourage safer choices. Children spend time in the community with friends and make informed decisions and take an active role in keeping themselves safe. As a result, there have been no missing episodes or serious safety concerns since the last inspection.

Staff explore children's feelings sensitively and help them learn alternative ways to manage emotions. When a child does not want to engage directly, staff reinforce key messages during everyday interactions and role modelling. Children learn to understand

different perspectives and take part in restorative work, strengthening their understanding and reducing conflict.

Staff share allegations or suspicions of harm promptly with appropriate agencies and manage them fairly and quickly in line with statutory guidance. Children are protected and supported throughout, with help given to both the child making the allegation and to the person subject to the allegation. This ensures children feel listened to, understand the process and remain safe.

Risk assessments do not clearly identify children's risks or vulnerabilities. Staff do not use evidence consistently when determining risk levels, and the method used to calculate risk is unclear and leads to inconsistent scoring. This prevents staff from having the clear guidance they need to help keep children safer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff receive regular reflective supervision and feel well supported by a manager. Staff can approach the manager about personal and professional matters. Leaders encourage staff to develop in their roles and reflect on their relationships with children and with each other. Safeguarding is discussed routinely, with a consistent focus on children's progress and how staff can best support it.

Leaders ensure staff receive a thorough induction and training programme aligned with the statement of purpose. The home's model of care is mandatory and refreshed annually, and external clinical consultants enhance staff understanding and the quality of support provided to children. Staff benefit from effective training that equips them to meet children's needs. New or sessional staff are sufficiently familiar with children and the support and ongoing work, ensuring continuity of care and consistent practice across shifts.

Children's plans are reviewed regularly, and staff reflect on their practice during monthly team meetings. This supports care that remains consistent and aligned with each child's local authority care plan, ensuring that day-to-day support reflects the child's needs and planned outcomes.

Leaders take whistleblowing and complaints seriously and respond promptly. Investigations are thorough, and appropriate agencies are notified and kept updated where required. External consultants provide oversight, support procedural compliance and offer independent challenge. This contributes to a transparent culture in which staff have confidence.

The manager's monitoring of systems and processes is not consistently applied. A small number of actions relating to a child's health review still require completion, some care plans require updating, and an EHC plan has not been reviewed, including since the child transitioned to college. These gaps in information mean staff do not always have the most up-to-date guidance to support the child effectively.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective, and clear recording. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to The Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should make the best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement. They should be skilled in anticipating difficulties and be responsible for sustaining good practice ('Guide to The Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 55, paragraph 10.24).

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: Rebecca Roberts

Inspector

Lee Riley, Social Care Inspector

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