

2696856

Registered provider: Optimum Childcare Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This private home provides care for up to two children who may experience social and/or emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, two children were living in the home. The children spent time with the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in October 2022.

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 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: 15 October 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/10/2024	Full	Good
18/04/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are at the very heart of everything in this home. The warmth, commitment and dedication of the staff team are at the centre of every aspect of care and practice. Staff consistently go above and beyond to show children that they matter, celebrating their achievements and demonstrating unconditional positive regard. One child said, 'I wasn't sure about moving here, but it's the best decision I ever made. It feels like a home; they [staff] are like family.'

Since the last inspection, one child has moved on from the home in line with their care plan, and one child has moved in. The manager ensures that children's needs are central to decisions, as well as considering the skills and experience of staff. This thoughtful and child-centred approach helps children to settle quickly, laying strong foundations for building secure attachments and a lasting sense of belonging.

Staff have an unwavering commitment to helping children succeed. The quality of relationships between staff and children is exceptional, and staff know each child deeply. Children feel listened to, cared for and respected, and these connections support their overall well-being.

The manager and staff have high ambitions for children to do well, and they consistently promote the importance of education and learning. The manager has advocated effectively to secure education and training pathways that match each child's abilities and interests. One child has successfully moved to a specialist school that meets their needs, and another child has progressed into employment. One teacher said, 'They have made fantastic progress since living at the home. They have thrived since being there and have been pushed by the staff to be out of their comfort zone and learn independence skills.'

Multi-agency working enables children to experience improved health outcomes. Staff are proactive in ensuring that children have access to a range of health services, including specialist support that reflects their individual needs. The manager has demonstrated strong and proactive leadership by pushing for tailored training to further equip staff with the knowledge and skills required to support complex health needs.

Staff are committed to helping children build lasting memories. They create opportunities for fun and new experiences that enrich their lives. Children's individual interests are nurtured and encouraged. One child has an interest in singing. Since living at the home, the child has been having singing lessons and opportunities to record songs in a recording studio. This has supported the child's confidence and fostered their interest. Another child is being supported to learn to drive, and driving lessons have been sourced. There are photos of children on display all around the

home to celebrate their achievements and experiences and give them a sense of belonging.

Communication between staff and families is extremely strong. Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure that children maintain links to people who are important to them. This supports the children's emotional well-being and long-term stability. One parent said, 'It is a home from home. [Name of child] is loved and looked after. They [staff] are brilliant with me, and I can ring and ask anything.'

Children's views and wishes are at the heart of staff practice. Children feel confident to share their thoughts and experiences without fear of being judged. They say that they feel listened to and are actively involved in decisions that affect their daily lives.

Children are well supported to develop the skills they need for adulthood. The manager is ensuring that one older child's plan to move is well paced and that it is fully informed by the child's needs. Most importantly, the child and their views are at the centre of the planning, and they have responded positively to the support.

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

Safeguarding is firmly integrated into everyday practice, fostering an environment where children feel safe, supported and able to thrive. As a result of moving to this home and receiving consistent support from staff, both children are now at significantly reduced risk of harm.

Staff promote stability for children. Staff practice is guided by individualised risk management and behaviour support plans, which are informed by a strong understanding of the children's needs and vulnerabilities.

Children feel heard and express themselves confidently. When staff use physical intervention, this is proportionate and necessary to prevent harm. Staff aim to use the least restrictive measure possible. Children are spoken to afterwards, and conversations reflect a genuine curiosity to understand what the child was feeling and experiencing at the time.

Children no longer go missing from home, reflecting the strong relationships that they have with staff. Staff promote independence by encouraging safe opportunities to access the local community. Children are also encouraged to attend activities to support their social skills and provide opportunities to develop friendships in the local area. One child has recently raised money for a hospital by completing a charity bike ride alongside staff. This moment was treated as a significant accomplishment, with staff ensuring that the child felt encouraged and celebrated.

Staff understand any new or emerging vulnerabilities in relation to online safety. When concerns arise about online safety staff respond swiftly. Plans are put in place

to manage risks, and staff talk to children to help them understand potential risks. This supports children to develop safer online habits and make more informed choices.

Staff build meaningful, trusting relationships that promote emotional safety, resilience and a sense of belonging for the children. Consequences are rarely used and only when appropriate. Staff focus on reinforcing positive behaviour through praise and encouragement. This helps children to feel heard and understood.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The team is driven by an inspirational manager and a supportive responsible individual, who lead with integrity and warmth. Their dedication and child-centred approach ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of the children so they can thrive. One child's social worker said, 'The manager and staff do such a fantastic job; they make the children feel safe, valued and loved.'

Children, staff and professionals speak highly of the manager. One staff member said, 'The management team leads with compassion and empathy, not only towards the children but also towards the staff, which creates a positive and supportive working environment.' This positive culture ensures that children are cared for by confident and motivated staff, who share the same commitment and enthusiasm to deliver high-quality, child-centred care.

The manager's ability to develop and sustain excellent relationships with professionals ensures that children benefit from a well-coordinated and holistic approach. Research is also used to support staff's understanding of the children's individual needs so they can adapt their communication accordingly.

Staff benefit from a wide range of training opportunities. The manager is proactive in identifying training and development that is targeted to equip staff with the knowledge and understanding needed to support the children's needs as they evolve. This enhances their ability to provide highly individualised care and support.

There is a culture of learning and continuous improvement. Supervision sessions and team meetings are effective and contribute to stability in the team and the children making progress. These forums promote reflective practice and help staff to maintain a shared understanding of the children's needs. The manager has created champion roles in the team, allowing staff to develop knowledge and skills across all areas of practice.

The manager has excellent oversight of all aspects of the care provided. She demonstrates a deep understanding of the strengths and areas for development and continually seeks ways to improve practice and enhance the quality of care and children's experiences.

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: 2696856

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Optimum Childcare Limited

Responsible individual: Julie McShane

Registered manager: Zoe Sumner

Inspectors

Shauna Morley, Social Care Inspector

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