

2756164

Registered provider: Surrey 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 4 children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection there were 3 children living in the home.

The manager registered in August 2025.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 April 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 7 May 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/05/2025	Full	Good
17/09/2024	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children benefit from caring relationships with staff who know them well, but their experiences and progress are inconsistent and not sustained. A recent period of instability adversely affected children's sense of safety, emotional wellbeing and engagement in education. Managers' decision to end one child's time at the home has brought short-term stability but it is too early to see the long-term impact of this. Safeguarding practice is generally appropriate; however, weak management oversight, inconsistent review of incidents and the impact of police involvement reduced the effectiveness of protection for some children. The physical environment is not consistently homely due to damage and unmet maintenance needs. Leaders are committed and staffing is stable, but previous weaknesses remain and statutory requirements are unmet.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children have mixed experiences living in the home. Staff know them well, treat them with care and respect and are invested in their progress. The care children receive helps them to make progress in some areas, but this is inconsistent and not always sustained.

The home experienced an unsettled period in the weeks prior to the inspection, during which there were significant challenges in relation to behaviour and the dynamics between children. These issues impacted on the day-to-day experiences of all children. One child did not feel safe and was reluctant to come out of their bedroom. Managers made the decision to end one child's time at the home due to escalating concerns about their ability to keep them and other children safe. This was a child-centred decision, and managers carefully considered the impact on the child. They ensured the child was well supported with the move to a new home. This has had a stabilising impact on the home although it is too early to assess the long-term impact.

The child who left the home had made progress in some areas, for example, they established some positive relationships with staff and were supported to receive a specialist assessment. However, the child did not make progress in other areas and there were escalating concerns about their emotional wellbeing. Concerns were shared and escalated promptly by managers. However, there was a delay in accessing specialist support and treatment that may have impacted on the child's experience and ability to feel settled.

All children experience challenges in relation to accessing education. Staff work closely with education professionals and provide structure and learning opportunities in the home where required. Effective joint working led to periods of progress for some children, such as one child accessing school after a significant period out of education. However, progress is not sustained and events in the home have impacted on children's

ability to engage with education. Managers have recently assigned a staff member as education lead, which has had positive feedback from the education colleagues.

Children's important relationships are valued and supported in line with their care plans. Staff are flexible to ensure that arrangements for children to see family members run as smoothly as possible. They work well with the placing authority to ensure that children's wishes are known and inform planning and support. This helps support children's sense of identity and connection.

Staff work hard to help children with their physical and emotional health. They provide guidance and encourage children to attend appointments and follow treatment plans when needed. One child who had a significant physical health difficulty resulting in hospital admission, is now engaging fully with their treatment plan and their health and self-care is much improved.

Staff seek children's wishes and feelings regularly. Through day-to-day interactions, individual time and house meetings, staff support children to exercise choice about things like activities, décor, and meals. Staff conduct good quality one to one sessions with children to provide support around various issues relevant to them such as, future plans and peer relationships. This helps children to feel valued and to approach challenges in their lives.

The physical environment of the home is mixed. Children are supported to personalise and maintain their rooms and staff assist with this to promote cleanliness and safety. However, there is a significant amount of damage to the interior of the home and a need for redecoration and repair. Some unsafe items have not been removed from children's environment. One communal area of the home is unusable for children at present. As a result, the overall environment is not homely. Managers are aware of these concerns and have begun to make improvements.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Staff understand safeguarding risks and responsibilities and generally take appropriate action to protect children. They respond promptly when children go missing from home and work with external agencies to reduce risks. Effective joint working led to a significant reduction in missing episodes for one child. However, management oversight following incidents is inconsistent, and follow-up actions are not always timely or robust.

Staff take a positive approach to managing behaviour. They seek to engage positively with children, to help them express feelings safely and de-escalate situations. Physical interventions are used infrequently and only when required for safety reasons. However, they are not subject to consistent, good quality management review. This results in missed opportunities to monitor practice and support staff to learn and improve interventions when children are distressed.

There have been several occasions when staff felt unable to keep children and themselves safe and called police for support. These incidents had a detrimental impact on the experiences of all children. Although staff decisions to contact police were made with children's safety in mind, police involvement placed some children at risk of criminalisation. Three of the children were arrested following such incidents. On 2 occasions when children were arrested staff did not accompany them when they were taken to the police station. They did not receive the care and support they needed and managers did not identify or address these shortfalls through effective oversight.

When allegations are made or there are concerns about staff practice, managers normally take prompt, suitable action. They consult with other professionals such as the local authority designated officer when needed, consider interim safety measures and progress timely investigations. However, oversight and follow up is not always timely and thorough. Regarding one recent concern about staff practice, senior managers were not informed which meant they were unable to effectively oversee action taken.

There were significant concerns about fire risks arising from incidents in the home. When these concerns arose, staff took effective action to ensure the safety for children and staff. A fire safety plan was implemented immediately. As a result, fire risks in the home significantly reduced.

Concerns about online safety of two children are well understood. Staff and managers are proactive in reporting concerns and seeking the engagement of the placing local authority and police in managing risks. Staff completed individual educative work with the children to help them understand concerns and make safer decisions.

Door alarms remain in use for children's bedrooms. These are used for safeguarding reasons. Following the last inspection the manager obtained written consent from all placing authorities and completed a generic risk assessment in relation to their use. However, the need for alarms for each child is not supported by an individual assessment based on the child's needs and their use has not been regularly reviewed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Management arrangements have been stable since the last inspection. The manager is enthusiastic about their role, aspirational for children and has a good knowledge of their progress. However, weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have not been fully addressed and all requirements are repeated.

Managers understand the importance of effective working relationships with children's professional networks. While there have been some challenges in this area, managers took positive action to improve the working relationship with one partner agency. Professionals provided mostly positive feedback about communication, support, and safeguarding. Some professionals and 2 parents provided constructive feedback about aspects of communication, and this was shared with managers.

Staff receive good quality individual supervision. The manager has made improvements to the completion of probationary reviews and begun to implement plans for embedding the consideration of quality standards in supervision. Improvement is still needed to ensure that all staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisal.

Staff complete a suitable range of training. Managers have effective systems in place for tracking progress with this and required qualifications. Regular team meetings are held as part of the support structure for staff. The manager arranges specialist external input in this form which is linked to the needs of children. This helps staff to be informed in their care of children.

The manager is open to learning and reflection and encourages this in staff. They are conducting a learning review and arranging additional support for staff following the decision to end one child's time at the home. However, regular learning reviews as detailed in the provider's statement of purpose have not been conducted. This represents missed opportunities to ensure that there is consistent learning from challenges.

Notifications to Ofsted are not always timely and managers have not provided updates about the outcome of child protection investigations. This has impacted on the regulator's oversight of safeguarding issues in the home.

The manager has made progress in recruitment and retention of staff. Staff say they feel well supported by managers and colleagues. They describe positive relationships across the team and a culture of mutual support and reflection which helps them to negotiate difficulties. This supports consistency of care for children and relationship building.

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 quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who— understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background; help each child to understand and manage the impact of any experience of abuse or neglect; ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to— meet the needs of each child; and enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(iv)(v)(c)(i)(ii)) In particular, ensure prompt attention to maintenance, repair and the removal of unsafe items. In particular, ensure that specialist support is made available to children when they need it.	21 May 2026

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— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; 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; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and 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)(b)(c)(f)(g)(ii)(h)) In particular, ensure consistent oversight of incidents and follow up actions, including addressing of concerns about staff practice and ensuring timely notifications to Ofsted. In particular carry out learning reviews following incidents as described in the statement of purpose. This requirement is restated.	9 June 2026
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ("the behaviour management policy") which sets out—	9 June 2026

how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home; and the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. The registered person must ensure that— within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ("the authorised person")— has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35(1)(a)(b) (3)(b)(i)(ii)) This requirement is restated.	
The registered person must ensure that all employees— 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 (4)(b)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff receive regular supervision and appraisal in line with company policy. This requirement is restated.	9 June 2026
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d)) In particular, ensure that the use of door alarms for children is subject to an individual risk assessment for and regularly reviewed.	9 June 2026

This requirement is restated.	
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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: 2756164

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Surrey County Council

Registered provider address: Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate RH2 8EF

Responsible individual: Samantha Heighes

Registered manager: Moira Storkey

Inspector

Jacob Robson, Social Care Inspector

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