

2775131

Registered provider: Great Oak Lodge Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to 4 children aged between 11 and 17 who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, 4 children were living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2025.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 April 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: 8 July 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
08/07/2025	Full	Good
05/08/2024	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Staff provide children with a nurturing and supportive environment. They know the children well and respond to their individual needs. They show a strong commitment to children's care and wellbeing. Education is a clear priority supported by a member of staff who promotes engagement. Children have clear plans to guide their care and support. Incidents are generally well managed. However, at times, de-escalation strategies are unclear. The manager provides effective analytical oversight. The staff are invested and care for the children. Some of the consequences used have not supported children's understanding and learning.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Three children live in the main house and spoke to the inspector. One child is being supported with independence and is living in the annex connected to the main house.

Staff are committed to ensuring that children experience stability and consistency. One child was in hospital for an extended period following an accident. Staff supported the child daily while he was in hospital. They advocated for a safe return home and used creative approaches to support the child's recovery. This helped the child feel valued and develop trusting relationships with staff.

All children have an identified education provision. One member of staff is the education champion and places a strong emphasis on education. Staff listen to the children's views and act on them. One child was supported in returning to their preferred school. For a child who is unable to attend their school, staff have shown a clear drive in identifying a suitable provision. Feedback from the headteacher of the virtual school highlights that the staff work hard to get children into school and maintain school placements.

Children appear happy and settled. They spend time with staff and were seen baking and doing schoolwork. Staff recognise and celebrate important events and achievements in children's lives. Children's achievements are illustrated in memory books. Staff also produce and display monthly home newsletters. These provide children with a record of their time at the home and allow them to reflect on their positive experiences.

Staff regularly seek children's views with daily check-ins and regular one-to-one sessions. Records are well written and clearly reflect the children's views. Children's meetings take place weekly. It is clear what actions will be taken so children can see they have been heard. Staff ensure that all children are included and have opportunities to express their views.

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

Staff plan effectively before children move in. A suitability assessment considers children's individual needs alongside the needs of the other children already living at the home. The staff meet with the child and talk to them about the home. Children are offered an opportunity to visit the home. These assessments and processes are comprehensive and carefully considered.

There have been a high number of incidents at the home. Significant incidents are generally well managed. Following incidents, staff update risk assessments, safety plans and care plans. These documents are clear and reflect children's needs and current presentation. They provide staff with clear guidance on how to manage and support children.

Incidents are well recorded. Staff provide children with follow-up one-to-one discussions after incidents. This helps children reflect on their feelings and consider alternative approaches.

Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of their needs. Staff use this understanding to provide responsive and nurturing care. Two incidents occurred when staff did not adhere to the children's support plans. During these incidents, it is not clear which de-escalation strategies were used. This limits the oversight of the approaches used to prevent situations from escalating.

Staff generally manage consequences in a considered way. They use some natural and appropriate consequences; however, they are not always restorative in nature. This can make it difficult for the child to fully understand the intended learning. In some situations, when consequences are extended over time, this can reduce their overall effectiveness.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are ambitious for the children and staff. Feedback from a child's social worker describes the manager as a 'committed' and 'dedicated' advocate for children. The manager and staff work well alongside other professionals. A range of positive feedback supports this.

Management oversight is effective and analytical. The manager carries out monthly reviews of the incidents to identify any trends or patterns. This helps inform practice and improve responses. The manager attends handovers and reviews all the children's records and documents. Actions are clearly recorded and followed up with staff to ensure that learning is embedded and practice is improved.

Staff are supported in taking on champion roles. They are committed to their responsibilities and demonstrate a clear focus on improving outcomes for children. Staff are happy with the progression opportunities available and wish to remain in the company. This helps build a skilled and stable workforce.

Staff benefit from regular team meetings and group reflection. Reflection takes place during team meetings. Supervision sessions are carried out in line with policy and incorporate detail and reflection. They provide staff an opportunity to express their views, receive feedback and identify any areas for development.

Staff have access to all relevant mandatory training. There is an investment in staff training and development. When staff have expressed an interest in further training, the request has been actioned. This supports building a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and positive responses to other children and adults. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(xi))	26 June 2026

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any consequences used to address poor behaviour are restorative in nature and help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them, and the wider community. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

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: 2775131

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Great Oak Lodge Limited

Registered provider address: Building 18, Gateway 1000 Whittle Way, Arlington Business Park, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2FP

Responsible individual:

Registered manager: Gemma Bloomfield

Inspectors

Harkerat Lidhar, Social Care Inspector
Naomi Starbuck, Social Care Inspector

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