

2796522

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

A private provider owns the home. It offers care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living in the home.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 14 October 2025.

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 11 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/02/2025	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

During the inspection, the inspector spoke with both children currently living in the home to gather their views about their experiences. A child who previously lived at the home also spoke with the inspector to share their perspective on the care they received when living there.

Children benefit from living in a warm and nurturing environment that promotes a strong sense of belonging. The home is welcoming and homely, and children's bedrooms are personalised to reflect their individual tastes. Children settle quickly when they move in, even after previous moves, and make positive progress in their emotional stability. Behaviours that were previously seen reduce as children begin to feel safe and supported.

Children are making good progress in all areas of their lives. Both children attend school consistently because staff work effectively with education providers and offer practical and emotional support to help children engage in learning.

Children's health needs are managed well. All routine and specialist appointments are up to date, and staff respond effectively to specific health concerns. Where additional assessments are required, staff have proactive plans in place to escalate these promptly if necessary.

Children experience care that is culturally sensitive and tailored to their individual needs. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting identity and inclusion. For example, one child was supported to attend the mosque, learn to cook Afghan food, and celebrate Eid and Ramadan. Staff actively participated in these celebrations, which helped the child feel valued and respected.

Children have trusting relationships with staff. Staff and children were observed interacting in a caring and respectful way, demonstrating the positive connections that have been built. One child said that the home gave him 'positive memories' and 'prepared them well for independence', while another described staff as 'kind and lovely' and said that they 'feel safe and happy living in the home'. When children experience difficult days, staff respond sensitively by offering space and reassurance, which shows good emotional support and contributes to children's overall well-being.

Children enjoy a wide range of positive experiences that help them build confidence and develop social skills. These include attending Scouts, going on day trips and celebrating birthdays with family and friends. Age-appropriate opportunities, such as walking to local shops and inviting friends to the home for meals, support children to develop resilience and essential life skills.

Regular family time is supported in ways that create positive and meaningful experiences for children. Relatives said that they feel welcomed and included in celebrations and special events, which strengthens bonds and reassures them that their child is safe and cared for.

Children understand clear routines and boundaries because staff provide consistent guidance and support. Both children follow structured daily routines, which helps them feel safe and know what to expect. Staff reinforce these expectations in a calm and positive way, promoting stability and security. However, boundaries are not always implemented from when a child first moves into the home. This does not help children to understand expectations when moving into somewhere unfamiliar.

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

Children are kept safe because staff know them well and respond effectively to their needs. Missing-from-home incidents have been significantly reduced, with only one incident since July 2025. Strategies to manage risks are clear, effective and easy for staff to follow, which helps maintain children's safety and well-being. However, some staff are not fully confident about which external safeguarding reporting routes to use if required. Leaders and managers have committed to reinforcing this guidance during team meetings to strengthen safeguarding practice.

Risk assessments are regularly updated so that safeguarding plans remain current and effective. Strong multi-agency working underpins this approach. Managers and staff share information in a timely manner and coordinate help to mitigate risks and promote children's safety and well-being.

Children and staff discuss a wide range of topics, including online safety, healthy relationships, friendships and vaping. These conversations take place both formally and informally during daily routines, helping to reinforce safe behaviours and promote children's understanding of risk. Online safety is addressed through proactive measures, such as having designated online safety champions and using internet passports to monitor and support safe online activity.

Staff use their positive relationships with children to de-escalate situations effectively, helping children to feel secure and supported. There have been very few incidents in the home and only one use of restraint since the last inspection. This reflects the manager's strong oversight and the team's proactive and nurturing approach to supporting children's emotional well-being and managing distress. All incidents are reviewed, leading to reflective practice and targeted interventions that reduce risk and promote learning for both children and staff.

While most staff demonstrate confidence in applying physical intervention techniques if needed, this is not yet consistent across the team. Leaders and managers are exploring ways to strengthen staff skills in these areas through practice sessions and scenario-

based learning. These developments support a cohesive approach to care and promote children's safety and emotional well-being.

Incidents involving staff are rare. When concerns have arisen, they have been investigated promptly, and appropriate actions have been taken in line with policy and safeguarding procedures. This demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining safe practice and protecting children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Staff report that the change of registered manager since the last inspection has been positive. They describe the new manager as committed and say that their leadership has strengthened the team. Support systems are strong, with regular supervision sessions, team meetings and recognition initiatives that help staff feel valued and motivated. Staff feel that they are learning a lot from the manager and that their enthusiasm shines through. There has been little impact on children because the new manager was previously the deputy manager and already knew the home and the children well.

The registered manager demonstrates strong oversight of the home, reviewing incidents and activity logs in a timely way. Both the registered manager and the responsible individual have a clear understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. This insight supports reflective practice and drives sustained progress.

Professionals report that communication from managers and staff is excellent and that staff work effectively as part of a multi-agency partnership to achieve the best outcomes for children.

The staff team is stable and consistent, and agency staff do not work in the home. This provides stability and continuity of care for children. There is a strong culture of professional development, and all staff are working towards completing their diplomas.

Training and development opportunities are managed well. Staff have access to a wide range of relevant training, and this is monitored through a training matrix. Team meetings are used effectively to address training needs, home improvements and children's individual needs.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all staff, particularly newer team members or those finding it challenging, have practical refreshers on physical intervention techniques and scenario-based learning to build staff confidence and ensure safe, consistent practice. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)
- The registered person should strengthen preventive planning when new placements occur by setting clear boundaries and expectations for children from when they start living in the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7)

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: 2796522

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Utopia Children's Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Duncan Woodger, Unit 9, Wheatstone Court, Davy Way, Waterwells Business Park, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 2AQ

Responsible individual: Carleen Dobson

Registered manager: Louise Mitchell

Inspector

Karen Hallam, Social Care Inspector

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