

2818206

Registered provider: Wokingham Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is owned and run by the local authority. The statement of purpose says that the home provides a family environment for up to four children. There was one child living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted in January 2025. This was the first inspection since the home was registered.

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

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	requires improvement to be 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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The child is forming positive relationships with staff and making progress in many areas of their life. The child is beginning to feel settled and secure, allowing staff to help them explore their feelings and past trauma, issues the child's social worker says they have not been able to talk about before.

Staff encourage the child to share their views and actively listen to the child's ideas or concerns, working hard to ensure that these are understood and responded to effectively and appropriately. Staff are helping the child to feel that this is their home. The child said that they like the home and that they want to stay living here. The child is becoming more confident in sharing how they feel and saying what they would like. In the main, staff are listening to the child and helping them to understand their rights and responsibilities. The child is learning to reflect on staff's discussions and will come back after a period of consideration for more information or clarity where needed.

The child attends education on a reduced timetable. The child does try their hardest to be up and ready each morning. The recent disclosure of bullying at school has been taken seriously by staff and shared with the wider network. Staff are encouraging the child to try new experiences. This has led to a few trips to the cinema and a trip to a theme park. The child spoke about enjoying these experiences.

Relationships with staff and professionals who are supporting the child are particularly positive. Managers liaise with the wider network as needed, and their information-sharing is seen as positive by the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) worker and social worker. Regular meetings with other professionals have highlighted the improvements the child is making since moving into the home through the approach to joint working and stability for the child. It is noteworthy that the child has attended medical appointments. This is something they had not done in previous homes.

The move into the home was managed well, given the urgent nature of the move. There were gaps in the pre-placement referral documents provided to the home. However, managers did have access to further information from a CAMHS report but did not add this into the child's plans. This led to staff not being fully prepared for some of the child's presenting needs when anxious or upset.

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

The child says that they like the home and can go to some staff if they are worried or upset.

The risks the child faces are understood by some staff. However, other staff are still struggling with understanding the reasons for the child's behaviour and doubting their

ability to suitably care for them. This lack of confidence impacts their ability to respond to and care for the child appropriately when they are anxious or distressed.

Due to the team being new, and the child being the first child to live in the home, there are varied degrees of confidence in supporting the child when they are upset or distressed. Some staff are highly reflective, recognising that some of the child's behaviours are linked to their traumatic history, while others have yet to understand this. This means that the child is not receiving consistent care and messages around safety and appropriate ways to communicate distress.

Strong joint working with specialist radicalisation prevention police officers and CAMHS means that the child is continually being monitored and supported when they are struggling with their extremist views. Staff are proactive when they note the child watching inappropriate videos online. However, at times some staff are too cautious, and do not allow the child to explore topics that are in the news or are reflective of their age-appropriate curiosity.

Staff are confident in the processes to follow should they be worried for a child's safety or welfare, including how to escalate concerns in the local authority. Additionally, they are confident in responding when the child is missing from the home. Records are not as fully detailed as they should be, linking to the actions taken when the child has been missing from the home. The manager's oversight is clear and shows a significant decrease in the severity of concern when the child is missing from the home, including the child returning without police intervention and saying where they have been.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager and the deputy manager are clearly focused on providing the best possible experiences and outcomes for the child. They are confident in how the home and team should be working and are trying hard to increase staff's skills and confidence. The upcoming change in leadership is causing increasing anxiety in the staff team. The managers are seeking to provide a positive handover but it is not yet known who will be taking over the management roles.

Staff say they are very well supported by the managers and can go to them at any time. They receive mandatory training and are continuing to complete a wide range of other skills-based training that links to the child's needs. The training lead has identified further behaviours of distress training that may be useful for staff, but this has yet to be rolled out. Furthermore, staff have not yet had training in the therapeutic ethos as detailed in the statement of purpose. This leads to the home not fully meeting the aims as set out in their approach to care and support for children.

Managers are monitoring the child's progress and experiences and keenly praise the staff and child when even the smallest steps have been taken. They are confident in challenging the wider local authority if services are not available that the child may need.

Managers are reflective of how far the home has come since registration and since starting to support the first child. They recognise the areas that still require further improvement and development. Senior leaders within the local authority know that the home will require additional support when the managers move on and are considering how this will look.

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— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; communicate to each child expectations about the child's behaviour and ensure that the child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding; strive to gain each child's respect and trust; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; are provided with supervision and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of children, and to help children to do the same. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(i)(v)(viii)(ix)(x))	30 June 2025

In particular, build confidence in the staff team for staff to be able to support children when they are displaying behaviours of anxiety or distress.	
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)) In particular, support staff to recognise what is typical explorative behaviour.	30 June 2025
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; (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)) In particular, ensure that staff have training and have an understanding of the therapeutic approach detailed in the statement of purpose.	30 June 2025

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: 2818206

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Wokingham Borough Council

Registered provider address: Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Responsible individual: Isabel Prinsloo

Registered manager: Hayley Joyce

Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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