

SC064472

Registered provider: Willows (Devon) Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private provider. It provides care for up to 4 children who may have social and emotional needs.

Four children were living at the home at the time of the inspection. All of them were involved in the inspection.

Staff at the home are referred to as carers. This is reflected in the report.

The manager registered with Ofsted in September 2021.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 February 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	outstanding
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 3 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/12/2024	Full	Good
23/01/2024	Full	Good
21/02/2023	Full	Good
21/02/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have strong relationships with the carers looking after them. Carers know the children well and are invested in them. Children experience a stable core team, with one additional carer supporting. This helps the children to receive consistent care. Three children have moved on, and 4 children have moved into the home. There has been a lot of change. The team has worked hard to create and maintain close relationships with the children, and all of the children are settled and progressing.

The children all rated their home highly and said they feel safe. The main difficulty for all the children is their relationships with each other. Carers provide good support to the children to have positive relationships with each other. They are encouraged to repair relationships when they have difficulties.

All of the children are in education. Their attendance is high and they are all achieving. Children's successes are celebrated and praised. The home is lively and busy. During the inspection, all of the children were busy enjoying various activities or enjoying time with friends.

Children have been supported to have wonderful experiences. A holiday abroad was arranged, which was the first time for one child. The children have enjoyed quad biking, day trips out and concerts. Carers have supported the children to capture their special memories in fantastic memory books. These are kept up to date and will be easy for the children to take with them when they leave. Children are supported to add to their memory books and to be creative.

Children's health needs are well supported. There has been real progress for one child in attending medical appointments regularly and allowing carers to support them. Family time is supported well. Carers work closely with children's plans to ensure children spend time with family members in a safe and meaningful way.

Records indicate some inappropriate language has been used with children. On one occasion, a child was described as an 'opportunist', and on another was asked if they 'need an audience'. This practice is not in keeping with the therapeutic ethos of the home. It is also not how the children have described their care to the inspector.

The home is beautifully decorated and well maintained. The quality of the furniture and carpets shows the value that is given to the children. There have been improvements this year to the office space and garden, which benefit the children.

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

Children say they feel safe. They were all able to identify a carer they could talk to and trust. Children are listened to. This is reflected in what children said to the inspector and in records of conversations with children.

Carers have a good understanding of the risks to children and know how to manage their vulnerabilities. One child's medical needs are understood well by carers, and they know what to do to support the child. Plans have been informed by medical professionals, and carers know these well. Guidance to the team is clear. A medical passport and safety plan are in place for one child. These are clear and succinct, which will help carers if they need to refer to these in an emergency.

Adults have worked hard to prevent and disrupt children from going missing from the home. Again, plans are clear and carers know these. The close relationships that children have with carers support them to be safe when they do go missing from the home. Children often respond to carers' calls and messages, and carers continue to search for them and contact them. Carers know the children's friends and places the children are likely to be.

The strength of the relationships between the children and carers is evident in records of incidents. Children tell carers about any risk-taking behaviours. They talk to the carers about what has happened to them, and carers are able to get additional support. Carers strongly encourage children to make good choices.

Restraint has been used on occasion to keep children safe. Incidents are clearly recorded. Conversations take place with children promptly. Management oversight considers what the carers were doing as well as what was happening for the child.

Concerns about carers' practice are highlighted quickly and investigated thoroughly. Small lapses in practice are understood in terms of human error, but shortfalls are addressed with actions to improve.

Safer recruitment processes are in place with employed staff. On one occasion, an agency member of staff was used. This member of staff did not lone work whilst the required checks were completed.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The home is led by an inspirational manager who is highly ambitious for the children. As an organisation, there is a culture of high aspirations and wanting children to achieve. All of the children spoke about how 'amazing' the manager is. The children approach the manager for affection and are suitably nurtured and praised.

Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses. Learning from previous inspections has taken place. Managers take on feedback and put actions in place to improve. Management oversight of incidents is much stronger since the last inspection.

There is a focus on looking at what carers could do differently, highlighting shortfalls and putting actions to improve in place.

The manager is a strong advocate for children. She listens to the children to hear their views and then communicates them clearly to other professionals. The manager is proactive and thinks outside of the box to try and understand what has happened. She is not happy to accept a situation and continues to explore all avenues to really understand what has happened for a child.

Any challenge is met with a reflective response from the manager. Leaders and managers are aware of shortfalls within recording. Training in how to write more therapeutically has been organised.

Carers are up to date with training, and they received specific training to meet one child's particular needs. Carers speak of enjoying the work and feeling well supported by their managers.

Children's moves into and out of the home are well planned and supported. When children have not settled, this is reviewed promptly with the placing authority. The manager has called strategy meetings to ensure support is provided and highlight what is needed.

Unanimously the response from professionals is of 'excellent communication' and swift responses. Emerging concerns are also shared quickly with professionals. Family members and professionals say they are kept informed about children's care. One professional described the home as their 'first port of call' for any child needing care.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff responses to children are in line with the therapeutic ethos set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)

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: SC064472

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Willows (Devon) Ltd

Registered provider address: Old Farm House, Gussage St. Michael, Wimborne BH21 5JE

Responsible individual: Jayne Hammett

Registered manager: Michelle Tickner

Inspector:

Nickie Doney, Social Care Inspector

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