

Orange Grove Fostercare Three Shires

Orange Grove Fostercare Ltd

Wavendon Tower, Ortensia Drive, Milton Keynes MK17 8LX

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

The agency is based in Milton Keynes and is part of a large national company that supports foster carers. It provides a wide range of foster homes, including short-term and long-term, respite, parent and child, and emergency foster care placements.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2021.

At the time of the inspection, the agency had 44 approved fostering households and 52 children placed.

Inspection dates: 8 to 12 September 2025 and 27 to 29 October 2025

We returned on 27 October 2025 to gather additional evidence to inform the inspection judgement.

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 independent fostering agency provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The agency has strengths in many areas. Foster parents are very well supported by supervising social workers and other staff in the agency. Children's experiences of the care provided to them by their foster carers is good, and children are helped to make progress in all areas of their lives.

Children are assisted to stay in touch with the people who are important to them. Carers encourage children to maintain and develop their relationships with their families and friends when it is safe to do so. This means that children feel that their families and friends are valued.

Children often live with their brothers and sisters, and are supported well by their foster carers. Some carers' relationships with the children continue into adulthood through 'staying put' arrangements and/or through ongoing emotional and practical support. This helps children develop a positive identity, understanding and confidence and increases their ability to form and sustain attachments early in their adult lives. However, the agency does not have a consistent approach to ensuring young people are aware of safer caring plans for other children in the home. This has not had an impact on the care or safety of children.

The agency benefits from having a skilled family support worker. They provide practical help and advice, such as helping foster carers to equip children to seek employment. They also help children to prepare for starting school and moving to secondary school, and they help to support children in establishing daily routines.

Foster parents encourage children to pursue their education and interests. Children and young people shared examples of the positive difference that their foster families make. For example, one child is preparing to go to university, and another child has completed their King's Trust award.

Foster carers advocate well for the children in their care. One child said they benefited from their carers' support to remain engaged in school when they experienced bullying. The bullying was addressed, and the child was supported well to continue to attend and to engage in the day-to-day life of their school.

Although records on children's files are written addressing children directly, some of the language is not as positive as it could be. This undermines the therapeutic approach of the agency.

Foster carers are well supervised and have the support they need, and support is increased if this is needed.

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

Children are seen regularly by agency staff, with and without their carers and in different settings, to gain their views. Children know who they can talk to outside of their fostering family or agency should they have concerns.

Foster carers are clear about the processes to follow when children go missing from home. The number of incidents of children going missing from home is low. On the rare occasion that this does happen, the agency and foster carers take proactive steps to ensure the child's safe return and reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

The agency is proactive in putting appropriate plans in place when children have been at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. Clear strategies and targeted support, including support from external agencies, mean that children are helped to understand risk and the potential impact of harm when they are in the community.

Foster carers and the agency are responsive to risks. Supervising social workers ensure that risk assessments are updated so that foster carers have the most up-to-date information and strategies to follow to help them keep children safe.

Occasionally, children are placed with foster carers in an unplanned way in emergencies. However, risks are well considered, along with the foster carers' ability to meet the child's needs. The agency supports children to swiftly move in with carers, supporting them to settle quickly.

Children remain living in their fostering homes for long periods of time and this supports them to develop positively. Placement stability for children is good. Children and foster carers are provided with additional support when children are struggling or unsettled. This support is effective and keeps children safe and means that children do not experience multiple moves.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager understands the strengths and weakness of the agency. She has good and effective monitoring systems which ensure that she has effective oversight of the agency.

There is a variety of training on offer for foster carers, and they report that the training is of good quality and supports them in meeting the children's needs.

Recruitment procedures for staff adhere to safer recruitment principles, ensuring that only appropriately vetted staff are employed to work with children. However, the agency does not have a clear policy or procedure which defines the use of, or vetting of, sessional workers or external respite carers, should these be required. The very low number of these arrangements and constant focus on children's welfare means that this has not had a negative impact on children.



The fostering panel and agency decision-maker fulfil their quality assurance function through providing effective scrutiny to decision-making. Information is received promptly. This enables the decision-making to be timely and well informed. When there are concerns about carers, standards of care investigations are carried out, and carers return to the panel for review.

The agency is child focused. Foster carers are well supported to care for children and this in turn supports children to make progress from their starting points.

Staff are well supported and feel equipped to carry out their roles even when workload demands increase. Supervising social workers remain focused on supporting children and foster carers.

The agency has good working relationships with external professionals. This aids effective communication and helps to secure support and services for children and foster carers if needed.

What does the independent fostering agency need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The registered person should only suggest foster carers to local authorities as a potential match for a child if the foster carer can reasonably be expected to meet the child's assessed needs and the impact of the placement on existing household members has been considered. When gaps are identified, the fostering service should work with the responsible authority to ensure that the placement plan sets out any additional training, resource or support required. In particular, ensure that all information about the child is obtained to inform matching considerations and to avoid any delays in arranging and providing support to the child and their foster carers. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 15.1)
- Appropriate training on safer caring is provided for all members of the foster household, including young people of sufficient age and understanding, and ensures that foster carers understand how safer caring principles should be applied in a way which meets the needs of individual children. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 20.9)
- The fostering service can demonstrate, including from written records, that it consistently follows good recruitment practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance, in foster carer selection and staff and panel member recruitment. This includes Disclosure and Barring Service checks. All personnel responsible for recruitment and selection of staff are trained in, understand and operate these good practices. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 19.2)

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 Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the national minimum standards.

Independent fostering agency details

Unique reference number: SC485761

Registered provider: Orange Grove Fostercare Ltd

Registered provider address: Malvern View, Saxon Business Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove B60 4AD

Responsible individual: James McGarrigle

Registered manager: Erica Eversfield

Telephone number: 01908 804497

Inspectors

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