

2808820

Registered provider: Gracebridge Care

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and provides care for up to three children who may have social and emotional difficulties.

Two children were present during the inspection and spoke to the inspector.

The manager registered with Ofsted in December 2024 and is suitably experienced.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 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	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: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the home's first inspection. Two children have moved into the home and no children have moved out. At the time of the inspection, two children lived in the home.

Children and staff have developed excellent relationships. Staff understand and meet children's individual needs and invest in their progress. One child said, 'Staff are really good, I get on well with them.' Another child said, 'I like it here, the staff are nice and so friendly.' Interactions between staff and children are natural, warm and reciprocal.

The manager carefully considers referrals for children, dedicating time to understand and assess each child's vulnerabilities and risks, and how these may impact other children living in the home. Before children move into the home, staff visit them to gather their views and share information about the home. They are invited to visit the home, meet the staff team and explore their potential new environment. Introductions also include virtual calls to children, ensuring they feel connected and informed. This thoughtful and thorough process helps children to settle in quickly, ensures their stability and safety, and minimises any unnecessary disruption to their lives.

Both children have made significant educational progress since joining the home. One child was not in education prior to coming to the home. Through the manager's dedicated advocacy with external education professionals, the child now has a permanent educational placement. Both children expressed enthusiasm about attending school and recognise the importance of education in achieving their career aspirations.

Children make strong progress in developing their independence. They can prepare simple meals and keep their bedrooms tidy. They also receive guidance on how to use public transport safely, which has resulted in one child confidently travelling alone during their free time. During the inspection, children were observed baking and decorating cupcakes. Staff support children to be independent by teaching them practical life skills, encouraging responsibility and boosting their confidence in completing tasks on their own.

The manager and staff promote harmonious living and healthy peer relationships in the home. Children get on well with each other and enjoy participating in activities together, such as outdoor adventures. These shared experiences help children to develop essential social skills, including communication and empathy.

Staff help children to spend time with those people who are important to them, such as family. Staff have positive relationships with family members, ensuring that safe and meaningful visits take place when appropriate. A parent said, 'Staff have accommodated our family time and drove [Name of child] to us so we can have time with her.' This approach aids children in maintaining connections with people who are significant in their lives.

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

Children trust the staff. They say that they like living in the home and know they can go to staff if they feel worried about anything. One child said, 'I know I am safe with the staff here. I can go to them at any time.'

The manager develops individualised plans and protocols to address each child's needs and associated risks. These are based on the home's model of care and the research expertise of the in-house clinician. The manager and staff routinely review and update children's plans to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.

There have been very few safeguarding incidents in the home. When incidents do occur, staff respond appropriately and follow the correct safeguarding procedures to ensure that children are kept safe.

When children cause harm to themselves, staff respond promptly with compassionate care, and referrals are made to specialist agencies for additional support. This approach fosters a non-judgemental environment where children feel safe to seek help. One child said, 'I trust staff, they always ask me how I am doing, and ask if I am okay.' This demonstrates a strong commitment to both the immediate and long-term well-being of children.

There has been only one missing-from-home incident. Staff promptly followed the child's individual protocol and quickly located the child. Staff spoke with the child about the risks and associated dangers of going missing and how to stay safe. This proactive approach has been effective, as there have been no further missing-from-home incidents.

Staff manage children's behaviour well. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort, after all de-escalation techniques have been exhausted. The manager maintains oversight of all incidents and holds discussions with children and staff following each occurrence. In addition, staff support children to reflect on incidents, providing them with the opportunity to express how they are feeling.

Staff ensure that children use the internet safely. They actively promote online safety by implementing age-appropriate parental controls and conducting regular device checks, as outlined in each child's plan. Staff equip children with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the online world responsibly through engaging sessions, bespoke project work and safe online training. This proactive approach helps children to understand potential online risks and the importance of responsible behaviour, while also empowering them to recognise and report harmful behaviours, thereby promoting a safe online environment.

Children gain a deeper understanding of their behaviour and celebrate their successes through individualised incentive systems tailored to their interests. These systems incorporate incentive charts and offer rewards, such as additional pocket money,

enabling children to purchase items of their choice. This approach not only acknowledges immediate achievements but also promotes long-term personal growth, helping children to associate positive outcomes with engaging and motivating experiences.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is dedicated, aspirational and effective. She is supported by a capable and committed deputy manager. Both leaders know the children well and adopt a child-centred approach. Their ethos and drive are reflected in the wider staff team, motivating them in their practice. One member of staff said, 'She really helps us to improve.' Another commented, 'Both the manager and deputy manager are supportive and helpful; they are good with the children. The manager is like a mother in her approach to the children.'

Staff report that they enjoy working in the home and feel supported by one another. One member of staff said, 'We know each other's strengths and we will use these so the day is productive.' This positive culture promotes healthy working relationships.

The manager ensures that staff are well supported to carry out their roles effectively. Staff receive a range of relevant training to meet the children's needs. As a result, they have the knowledge and skills required to provide good-quality care to the children.

Staff receive regular supervision. Reflective discussions, which are focused on children's well-being and safety, are central to these sessions. The manager recognises the importance of staff welfare. One members of staff said, 'It's a good and safe space for me to openly say what I want to, and I am not judged.' This helps to ensure that staff are well prepared to support children effectively.

The manager holds reflective team meetings, creating additional learning opportunities to enhance staff practice. The home's clinical lead supports staff in adopting a therapeutic approach to better understand and manage children's emotions. These discussions focus on identifying effective strategies and areas for improvement in children's care. This collaborative process fosters a culture of continuous learning, enabling staff to provide responsive and effective support to children. By integrating reflective practice into their routine, staff are able to adapt emerging changes and challenges, ensuring that the care provided aligns with best practice and meets the evolving needs of the children.

Overall, the manager's monitoring systems are effective. However, on one occasion, the home's independent person did not submit their report, which limited the regulator's oversight of the home. Additionally, one child was not offered access to, or support from, an advocacy service. During the inspection, the manager rectified this promptly by speaking with the child and providing information about an advocacy service. The manager has assured that immediate processes will be implemented to prevent a recurrence of these shortfalls. These issues have had no impact on the quality of care provided for children and do not detract from the good management of the home.

Partnership working with external agencies is strong. External professionals consistently commend the manager and staff for their effective communication and high quality of care provided to children. A common theme in feedback from both parents and professionals is how well the children are doing and the good progress they are making. One parent said their child is 'very, very settled, we are really proud how well she is doing'.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that all children are offered access to appropriate advocacy support. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 23, paragraph 4.16)
- The registered person should ensure that their independent person submits their report to the regulator within the required timescales. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 55, paragraph 10.24)

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: 2808820

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Gracebridge Care

Registered provider address: Arden Lodge, 946 Warwick Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 6QG

Responsible individual: Richard Perry

Registered manager: Amy Carroll

Inspector

Jas Nahar, Social Care Inspector

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