

Orange Grove Fostercare Staffordshire

Orange Grove Fostercare Limited

30b & 30c Brookside House, Brookside Business Park, Cold Meece, Stone,
Staffordshire ST15 0RZ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

This independent fostering agency is part of a national organisation that provides fostering services across England.

The agency currently supports 60 carers in 40 households caring for 57 children. Placements are primarily short term or long term and some carers provide respite care.

A new manager has been appointed since the last inspection and is registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 10 to 14 October 2022

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: 21 May 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have trusted and secure relationships with their carers. Carers know the children well and provide individualised care. Children have a sense of belonging and are fully included in their foster family's lives.

Children are carefully matched to their carers. The agency ensures that children are placed with carers who have the skills and knowledge to meet their needs. Many of the children are matched long term with their carers and many are placed with their siblings. There is a strong desire to achieve permanence for children.

The agency has excellent support available to carers, through dedicated supervising social workers and family support workers. Carers and children are offered wraparound support when needed. In addition, family support workers undertake some work with children on a one-to-one basis, for example, to address issues relating to healthy relationships and internet safety. This level of support helps to keep children safe and achieve placement stability.

Generally, children do not leave their foster homes in an unplanned way. On occasions when this has happened, the registered manager has undertaken reflective analysis and implemented any learning. For example, the agency is keen to offer an early intervention plan of support to prevent situations escalating.

Children make good progress from their starting points and have a range of positive experiences. For example, children have gained confidence and can now participate in their meetings to share their thoughts, wishes and feelings. In addition, a child who was afraid of water has achieved their 30m swimming badge and a child who was very shy is now involved in a singing group. Children are also included in family trips and holidays and enjoy ordinary childhood experiences.

The agency tracks children's educational progress regularly. There is a good understanding of children who need additional support in school and college and this helps carers to liaise with their children's teachers to ensure that children have the right kind of support. As a result, children are generally doing well in school and college and achieving their potential.

The manager and staff work hard to help children and carers feel part of the agency. This is achieved through regular activities and forums. In addition, feedback is taken from children, for example to seek their views on upcoming activities. Children's achievements are celebrated in regular newsletters. The agency's office displays photos of events that children and carers have attended and children's artwork, which give it a friendly and warm feel.

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

Children feel safe. Children spoken to by inspectors said that they can identify someone they can speak to if they are worried about anything, including carers,

supervising social workers and family support workers. Children know how to make a complaint. The agency investigates complaints in line with its complaints procedures.

Children do not routinely go missing from care. When this does happen, carers work with partner agencies to understand why children go missing and take action to prevent it from happening again. Early indicators of risks around exploitation are understood. For example, the inspector spoke to one carer who has received specialist training to help increase their awareness of early warning signs associated with child exploitation and the child is receiving targeted support from the family support worker.

Managers and leaders have effective oversight of any safeguarding issues. These are regularly tracked, with managers and leaders ensuring that children and carers are receiving the support that they need.

The carers' assessment process is thorough. New carers feel welcomed by the agency. Carers feel supported by the manager and the staff team, including with out-of-hours support. Carers receive good-quality supervision, which supports their development and promotes the good care of children.

There is a clear system for managing allegations, which is implemented well, including appropriate liaison with the local authority designated officer. Investigations are completed, with recommendations taken back to an early foster carer review and to panel to inform decision-making about the carer's continued approval.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there have been changes to the staff team. There have been three different managers and the current team of staff are nearly all new. This period has been an unsettling time for carers and staff. However, this has now stabilised, with a permanent registered manager in place and a fully staffed permanent team with no vacancies. As a result, the carers and staff say that the agency now feels more secure and stable and is going in the right direction.

The registered manager has worked hard to develop positive relationships and build trust with the carers and staff. The manager has high aspirations and is child-centred. The manager is driven and is continually working towards improving outcomes for children.

Staff appointed to work for the agency are recruited safely. They feel supported and valued. Managers invest in staff, with some staff being supported to pursue external training and learning.

The manager has a good understanding of the service's development. There is a clear recruitment strategy in place to support manageable growth.

The agency works closely and well with partner agencies such as schools and local authority social workers. Social workers spoke positively about the care their children receive and about the support provided by supervising social workers.

Carers and staff receive mandatory and additional training specific to their roles and needs of the children. However, not all carers have completed this training, for example, paediatric first-aid training is not being completed before young children are placed with carers. In addition, the agency is not routinely ensuring that carers and staff have training to inform them of their responsibilities under the Prevent duty. Although Prevent training is not mandatory, not ensuring this training is undertaken means that staff and carers may not be fully aware of and alert to risks related to radicalisation and extremism.

The fostering panel functions are generally effective. The panel members are recruited from diverse backgrounds and they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to support the agency. However, in one case, there was a lack of attention to detail in the panel quality assurance process. This led to an incorrect approval being given to a carer. This error was picked up by the supervising social worker before children were placed. The agency has reviewed this error to learn any lessons. Although there was no impact on children, it is of concern that this was not picked up sooner in any of the agency's quality assurance processes.

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

Recommendations

- The panel chair should ensure that written minutes of panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for the panel recommendation. In particular, ensure that the panel quality assurance process is robust and picks up any errors promptly. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 14.7)
- The registered person should ensure that support and training are made available to foster carers, including hard-to-reach carers, to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for. In particular, ensure that carers have completed their mandatory training and any other training, such as in paediatric first aid, that the agency feels carers should have before children are placed with them. This also refers to ensuring that carers understand their responsibilities under the Prevent duty. ('Fostering services: national minimum standards', 20.8)

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: SC485797

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Inspectors

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