

Orange Grove Fostercare Northwest

Orange Grove Fostercare Limited

North West Office, Walnut Tree Business Centre, Suite 3, Northwich Road, Lower Stretton, Warrington WA4 4PG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this independent fostering agency

Orange Grove Fostercare Northwest is an independent fostering agency. It was registered with Ofsted in 2015 and the agency is part of Orange Grove Fostercare, an independent fostering provider with five registered offices across the country. The agency offers emergency, short-term, long-term, permanent and respite placements.

At the time of the inspection, the agency had 34 fostering households who were providing care to 42 children.

Inspection dates: 1 to 4 September 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The independent fostering agency provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the independent fostering agency contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of last inspection: 10 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are described by professionals as being happy, settled and thriving in their foster homes. Social workers and other professionals consistently praise the quality of care provided, with a child's guardian describing the carers' work as 'impressive'. Foster carers are recognised for their strong communication and their ability to build trusted relationships with children.

Children make significant progress from their starting points. Several children have been supported to overcome complex challenges, including developmental delays and the impact of chronic neglect. Foster carers use creative approaches to support children's growth. For example, one child was introduced to martial arts to help improve their mobility and confidence. Another child, who was previously nonverbal, is now able to speak, read, write and follow a daily routine. Their school attendance has improved significantly and they have achieved successful results in recent exams.

Children enjoy a wide range of new experiences, including learning to swim, travelling abroad, and participating in regular football training and matches. Many children live with their brothers and sisters. This provides them with emotional security and a strong sense of belonging. Foster carers offer consistent, nurturing care and maintain strong, trusting relationships with children and supervising social workers.

Matching processes are thoughtful and child centred. The agency considers foster carers' training, experience and household circumstances alongside the child's individual needs. The registered manager closely oversees matching decisions, which contributes to children feeling secure and supported from the start.

Most children remain in their foster homes for extended periods, and 'staying put' arrangements are considered when appropriate. One child said: '[Name of foster carer] has changed my life for the better. They have honestly made me into the person I am today, and I don't know what I would do without them.' One foster family was also able to welcome three children at short notice, with the agency taking swift action to ensure that they can stay together as a family group.

On occasions when children move on from their foster families in an unplanned way, the agency ensures that there is a safe and supported transition. The agency provides detailed information to a child's placing authority to support child-centred decision-making. Leaders and managers also ensure that foster carers receive a well-structured support package following any placement breakdowns, including therapeutic input, reflective supervision and independent advice. A clear action plan featuring trauma awareness training and emotional regulation strategies strengthens foster carers' ability to meet children's needs. This reflective, learning-focused

approach informs recruitment and matching, promotes resilience and provides long-term stability for children.

Children enjoy access to social and recreational opportunities. Activity days help build positive relationships between children and foster carers and children say they enjoy spending time with others. Foster carers value these opportunities to connect and support one another.

Children are supported in their education and make significant progress. One child completed exams with home-school support during a period when they were unable to attend school. Another child, who was at risk of exclusion, was able to maintain their school placement due to coordinated support from their foster carers and other professionals. Education tracking is prioritised by the agency as it is a key element in ensuring that children have clear routines and consistency in their lives.

Children's views are actively sought and included in agency practice. A well-developed Children in Care Council contributes to service design. Children are central to how the agency is run, and their voices influence how services operate for their benefit now and in the future. Supervising social workers visit children regularly, speak with them individually, and carry out unannounced visits at least twice a year to ensure they are known and trusted by children.

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

Safeguarding practice is exemplary. Allegations or concerns are shared promptly with relevant agencies and handled in full accordance with statutory guidance. When incidents and allegations occur, swift and appropriate action is taken to ensure the safety of all children living in fostering families. The agency supports children and foster carers involved and works closely with other safeguarding professionals, including the local authority designated officer and the placing authority, to maintain clear communication throughout. The agency also offers post-allegation therapy and independent support to those involved.

Highly effective risk management processes are in place. Newly recruited foster carers undergo thorough suitability assessments. Any concerns are addressed promptly through risk assessments. These are regularly reviewed and now include historical context, strengthening their quality and relevance.

Foster carers provide sensitive support, especially for children with additional needs. They help children express their feelings, praise achievements and support them through difficult situations. Clear routines and rules help children feel safe and in control, while strong connections with birth families are maintained.

Physical intervention is rare and only used as a last resort. Foster carers are supported through therapeutic debriefs and supervision to reflect and develop strategies for managing behaviour. Safeguarding training is consistently completed

by foster carers and agency staff. However, some foster carers have expressed a preference for more face-to-face sessions. This is something that leaders and managers are keeping under review.

Agency staff and foster carers understand their safeguarding responsibilities and respond appropriately to concerns about exploitation or episodes of going missing. Children rarely go missing from their foster home, but when they do, foster carers and agency staff act swiftly to ensure that plans are actioned to locate and support children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership is highly child focused and strategically aligned to the wider agency objectives. Managers demonstrate a clear commitment to supporting children, foster carers and staff. Team meetings show a strong focus on improving practice, welcoming and saying goodbye to children, and capturing the child's voice in records. Agency staff and foster carers are reflective and proactive, with a clear drive to develop good practice.

The agency's fostering panel is chaired by an experienced professional with many years' involvement in the sector. Panel membership is stable, and panel members are drawn from a variety of backgrounds, which brings a rich variety of questions to explore applicants' skills. Panels are diverse and provide high-quality oversight of agency practice with strong feedback measures. The agency decision-maker offers timely decisions and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Foster carers' annual reviews are consistently completed with strong oversight and collaboration between supervising social workers, the fostering panel and the agency's leaders. Reviews are reflective, child-focused and aligned with national minimum standards.

Training is comprehensive. All foster carers and staff are up to date with their required training. The agency responds to any identified gaps by developing targeted learning sessions. For example, a workshop on child-centred recording was tailor written by the registration following feedback about report writing. Foster carers receive mandatory and specialist training when required, which means they can care for children with a wide variety of needs.

Supervising social workers receive ongoing guidance and support from the agency's therapist to help them develop strategies and support for foster families. Supervising social workers are trained in a recognised therapeutic framework that underpins their support to and supervision of foster carers. This enables agency staff to guide foster carers in understanding children's behaviours through a trauma-informed lens, promoting empathy, emotional regulation and secure attachments. Foster carers report that this approach improves placement stability, strengthens relationships and helps manage day-to-day challenges.

Foster carers speak highly of the support they receive, describing supervising social workers as 'going above and beyond'. One male carer trained as a football coach to better support a child's interests and development and also co-delivers 'Prepare to Foster' training to prospective carers. These contributions reflect the agency's culture of shared learning and commitment to excellence.

No requirements or recommendations were made at this inspection.

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: SC485778

Registered provider: Orange Grove Fostercare Limited

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

Responsible individual: James McGarrigle

Registered manager: Heather Sheridan

Telephone number: 01925730435

Email address:

Inspectors

Colin Jones, Social Care Inspector

Nicola Forrester, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025