

1264537

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

This privately run children's home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people who may present with needs that are associated with behavioural and/or emotional difficulties.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since June 2018.

Visit dates: 16 to 17 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 15 August 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children enjoy trusting relationships with staff, and feel supported and cared for. One child said, 'Staff are amazing because when you feel down or sad they will hug you and speak to you to try and make it alright for you.'

Children have been supported to keep in contact with people they care about during periods of lockdown and social distancing. Staff advocated on behalf of children to ensure that agreed plans for them were not overly restrictive, and devised clear risk assessments to ensure that everyone was kept safe during this time.

Children's achievements and success in education are celebrated by staff and other children in the home. Two children passed their national qualifications and have successfully moved on to a college provision. Staff supported children with their education during lockdown and devised individual timetables to suit each child's needs. This was confirmed by a designated teacher.

Children's emotional needs are understood by the registered manager and the staff team. Some children receive support from specialised therapists to help them with issues such as grief and trauma. The registered manager has invited these professionals to staff meetings to ensure that there is a coordinated multi-agency response.

Children's bedrooms and living areas are well presented. However, when repairs are required in other parts of the home, including the replacement of the conservatory flooring and damaged walls, these do not take place in a timely manner.

The safety of children

Children are kept safe by staff who understand how to manage risk and challenging behaviour.

There have been no incidents of children going missing from the home. Serious incidents requiring the need for restraint are reducing in number. Restraint practice, when used, is proportionate and evaluated effectively by the registered manager. Any learning from incidents is shared with the staff to help them to understand triggers and reduce the frequency of any further incidents.

Children benefit from having clear boundaries, and any sanctions used are based on restorative practice. However, when sanctions have been applied, the records of these do not always reflect the children's views on the sanctions.

Staff continue to access training in a variety of formats to ensure that they understand how to keep children safe. This includes online training, face-to-face

training and workshops delivered by managers. This enables the staff to develop their skills and knowledge, and respond to any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders and managers

The registered manager is child focused and dedicated to improving outcomes for children. She advocates strongly for children, with one social worker telling inspectors, 'They [the registered person] focus on the best interest of the child... they really do care and speak up for them.'

The staff feel valued and supported by the registered manager and senior leadership team. Staff feel motivated and as a result have worked flexibly and dynamically during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide stability and consistency for children.

Staff have regular supervision sessions, team meetings and informal chats to help support their practice and well-being.

Internal and external monitoring processes are thorough and include feedback from children, parents and professionals. This ensures that managers can monitor and evaluate the service, and drive improvement in the care provided for the children.

Requirements made at the last inspection have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that children are supported to view and contribute to records in a way that reflects their voice. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 58, paragraph 11.9)
- The registered person should ensure that the children's home is maintained to a high standard. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1264537

Registered provider: Roc Northwest Ltd

Registered provider address: 5th Floor, Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Hertfordshire EN6 1AG

Responsible individual: Katie Stephens

Registered manager: Nicola Seasman

Inspectors

Jessica Forshaw, Social Care Inspector
Genevieve O'Reilly, Social Care Inspector

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