

2576346

Registered provider: Achieving For Children Community Interest Company

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run home provides care for up to five children. The home's statement of purpose specifies that care is provided for children with social and emotional difficulties.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in September 2020.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

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: 23 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/11/2021	Full	Good
24/08/2021	Full	Inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive high-quality individualised care, which has a positive impact on their lives and future outcomes. Progress for children with complex needs is not a linear process and children have intermittently made progress and at times had setbacks. Overall, children are helped and supported well to understand risks and manage their feelings and emotions.

Children experience positive relationships with staff, which helps them to trust adults and feel stable and secure. A newly established team of staff are working hard to be consistent in their approach towards boundaries to ensure that children receive the same messages about what is expected from them.

When children are not making expected progress or are experiencing setbacks, staff work hard to monitor and encourage improvement and engagement. Despite children's frustration or resistance, this motivational approach ensures that children are supported to make efforts and become involved in education, self-care and activities.

The staff team works hard to promote children's education and encourage their attendance. One child has recently sat GCSE examinations and has been offered places at both colleges applied to for the autumn term. Staff are establishing a plan to reintegrate another child back into regular attendance at school following some difficulties. This has involved creative thinking with education colleagues to be inclusive and promote an environment where success is most likely.

When children need more-specialist services to promote their emotional health, there is an organised and thoughtful multi-agency approach to referral and planning. One health professional states that the staff team has 'held the risk' and created 'therapeutic moments', which has helped children to secure better emotional and mental health.

Feedback from parents and professionals is generally extremely positive, with a few comments suggesting improvements in ensuring consistent and timely updates. Family time is promoted, and children are encouraged to have their parents/carers to visit at the home and to share food and drinks, which creates a 'family' and 'welcome' atmosphere in the home.

Children have opportunities to have their say. They are encouraged to give their views via key-work sessions, through meetings or directly to staff, who take time to listen. Children have also supported the recruitment process for employing new staff by suggesting questions and giving feedback on the answers provided by potential candidates and meeting them if there is an opportunity.

Children are encouraged to follow their interests, including art and cooking. Some children are encouraged to take on the responsibility of caring for their pets at the home.

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

Risks are clearly identified and recorded in helpful risk assessments to support staff in understanding how to keep children safer. The levels of staffing and the organisation of shift patterns meet the needs of the children living at the home. These basics have helped to ensure that children are responded to quickly and that staff can pre-empt difficulties and prevent escalation.

Experienced staff have built very positive relationships with children and are helping to support newer and less-experienced staff in managing and setting boundaries. Regular and reflective discussions in the staff team are endorsing and promoting a more consistent approach to managing behaviour.

Managers and staff have appropriately recorded and reported safeguarding incidents to the child protection team or designated officer for advice and/or investigation. Staff have a high awareness of children's individual needs, including risk of self-harming, exploitation and the risks social media can present for children. Staff use their skills and knowledge to have honest conversations with children, which helps them to understand and think about making positive choices.

There have been several physical interventions which have been necessary to implement a recent court order and keep children safe. Children are only physically restrained as a last resort and by staff who have been appropriately trained. Physical intervention records have improved since the last inspection and are ensuring that children can talk about their feelings when this action has been necessary.

A strength at this home is multi-agency working with the police and the child exploitation worker when children go missing from the home. The coordinated approach, which includes a consistent worker undertaking independent interviews when children return to the home, is undoubtedly helping to reduce these episodes and is helping to keep children safer.

There are still some incidents recorded that should have been notified to the regulator. This reporting helps the regulator to build a clearer picture of the level and type of incidents that are taking place at the home. Despite a failure to notify Ofsted, appropriate actions were seen to have taken place to ensure children's safety and well-being.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are ambitious for children and have high expectations of staff to ensure that children receive a high standard of care.

Leaders and managers are developing systems to give them a clearer understanding of the outcomes and progress children are making. These systems help to identify themes, triggers and patterns in behaviours. This, in turn, can help target training, de-escalation and improved responses.

The organisation running the home has created a learning environment. It has been a challenge for leaders and managers to recruit, retain and train staff to operate the home on the strengths-based model described in the statement of purpose, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is a stable, experienced and passionate core team in place, and the addition of new staff members has helped to provide a more consistent approach.

Staff describe feeling supported by leaders and managers through supervision and can contact managers on an ad-hoc basis at other times. Although there are some gaps in supervisions, these are known, and plans are in place to address this shortfall. Appraisals are carried out for staff who require them, and new staff are either completing induction or are on probation, after which they will have personal development plans to ensure their progression and training.

The clinical lead of the organisation is available to support staff and attends weekly team meetings. This is an extremely positive resource and helps staff to become more reflective in their practice and approaches to managing children's behaviours. In addition, staff can book individual sessions with the clinical lead to discuss individual cases or practice issues, which helps to build staff resilience, knowledge and care.

Leaders and managers are aware of the shortfalls in the service. The working arrangements between the manager and the deputy manager provide adequate cover for the operational running of the home.

Working with the professional network has been a strength of this home. Multi-agency working and effective advocacy support the day-to-day care and arrangements for children.

Leaders and managers are clear about expectations of staff and have set clear boundaries for children. This has led to a respect for the whole ethos of the home, which is inclusive, tolerant, nurturing and respectful of difference.

One requirement from the previous inspection has been met and another is in progress and has now become a recommendation. One previous recommendation has been repeated as, despite improvements, there is still some ongoing work to do. Another recommendation has been completed in full.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified to Ofsted in a timely manner. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)
- The registered person should have systems in place so that all staff, including the manager, receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional which allows them to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. Professionally qualified staff employed by the home, such as teachers or social workers, should be provided with relevant professional or clinical supervision by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

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 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: 2576346

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Achieving For Children Community Interest Company

Registered provider address: 42 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BW

Responsible individual: Matthew Edwards

Registered manager: Hannah Phillips

Inspectors

Christine Kennet, Social Care Inspector
Aneta Wasilewka, Social Care Inspector

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