

2639538

Registered provider: ARGF Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned. It is registered to provide care for up to three children with emotional and social difficulties.

There were two children living at the home at the time of this inspection and their views were obtained during the inspection.

The home is led by a registered manager.

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 June 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: 28 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/05/2024	Full	Requires improvement to be good
13/06/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
07/02/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
25/10/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress at this home. They have strong relationships with staff whom they trust. A homely atmosphere and environment have been created. Children are comfortable spending time with staff. Staff speak highly of the children and recognise and celebrate children's achievements.

There is a new format for children's plans. They combine care and behaviour and risk management. This provides staff with clear guidance on children's needs and how to support them to keep them safe. The manager, deputy manager and team leader review the plans regularly to ensure they remain up to date and accurate.

Staff hold frequent one-to-one discussions with children. They cover a range of topics that are meaningful to the child. They are recorded well and have management oversight added for learning. In addition, monthly children's meetings take place. These help to ascertain the wishes and feelings of the children.

Children are successfully supported to re-engage with education and learning. This often follows children being out of education for lengthy periods. It includes a child sitting exams and applying for college courses. Staff are creative with helping children to learn.

Staff help children to remain healthy. This includes encouraging children to eat healthily. Activities include exercise, such as membership of a gym and walks in the park. Children's mental health is also supported. Staff are kind and caring towards children.

Children's communication needs are understood by staff. Care is consistent. This ensures that children understand boundaries, as well as the way they will be cared for and responded to. This is particularly important for one child, who has more complex communication needs.

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

Staff understand risks to children. Risk assessments are combined with the child's care plan. Individual risks are identified. Ways to care for the child to mitigate the risks are clearly explained. Additional safety plans are in place when required. The location of the home has also been assessed for risk. This has included contact with the local police.

The manager responds well to any allegations against staff. They are investigated fully. Safeguarding professionals are included appropriately. Allegations are recorded well, including outcomes.

Children's incidents of unwanted behaviour are managed well by staff. They are trained in de-escalation and safe handling techniques. Physical intervention is rarely required.

When used, it is appropriate for the incident and lasts a short time. Detailed records are made by staff. Management oversight is added to help staff learn different approaches.

Staff act quickly and appropriately when a child displays harmful behaviour. Staff respond with kindness to the child. The manager also supports the staff well. They are helped to cope with the emotional impact of such incidents.

The manager ensures that safe recruitment practice is used for all new starters at the home.

A fire risk assessment is completed annually. Children's personal emergency evacuation plans are in place. However, the assessment has not been updated following changes made to the layout of the home. This should be reviewed earlier to ensure there are no additional risks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has ensured that the requirement and recommendations from the last inspection have been fully met.

The manager feels well supported by the responsible individual, who visits the home regularly. She receives monthly supervision. An additional quarterly session is provided by an external consultant. The manager also feels supported by the staff team. She said, 'My deputy manager and team are amazing.'

The format of staff supervision has been changed by the manager. It is more reflective. It includes a self-assessment of practice and targets set. It is consistently held with staff each month. The manager knows the strengths of the team and areas which she wants to develop further. She has included supervision in a development plan.

Team meetings are held every month. Additional meetings also take place if there is an important issue to discuss. This includes changes in a child's behaviour. Staff contribute to the meetings and are listened to. They feel able to approach managers with any concerns.

The manager has established an effective quality assurance process. She and the deputy manager use a 'live file' for auditing. This ensures that all documents are reviewed every week and sooner if urgent. Management oversight and learning is recorded on all records. The manager observes staff practice. She also speaks to the children to gain their views on the care they receive.

Staff love working at this home. They feel that they work very closely together as a team. They receive the support needed from the manager and provider. They want to make things better for children and keep them safe.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the home complies with relevant health and safety legislations (alarms, food hygiene, etc.). This specifically refers to updating the fire risk assessment when changes are made to the home. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2639538

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: ARGF Limited

Registered provider address: Office 29, Corby Enterprise Centre, London Road, Priors Hall, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 5EU

Responsible individual: Fanny Gombedza

Registered manager: Lauren Ward

Inspector

Shaun Caplis, Social Care Inspector

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