

2642116

Registered provider: Acorn Norfolk Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to two children with learning disabilities. It is operated by a national provider.

The registered manager left in December 2023.

The home is in the grounds of a special school and other children's homes that are all operated by the same national provider. The school is independently registered.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision.

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

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: 27 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/06/2023	Full	Good
27/07/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

One young person was living at the home at the time of the inspection. They have been there for over five years and have grown into adulthood. The staff have been able to offer this young person a sense of permanence. One young person moved out last year in a carefully planned way to an adult home on the same site.

Staff understood the young person. This enables them to build positive relationships. Staff use a variety of communication methods to ensure the young person can participate in their daily life. One young person used picture boards to understand daily routines and tasks.

The home has a calm feel. It is decorated nicely and has lots of prompts and pictures that help young people if they require routine-based care to understand what is happening next.

The young person is supported to see an independent advocate. The manager and staff also advocate in the best interests of the young person, and this can be seen throughout their practice.

The young person is supported to attend the on-site school and has an education plan that is tailored to their needs.

The young person experiences high levels of anxiety in the community. Staff have worked closely with them to help them to participate in activities suited to their needs. The young person recently went on a trip to a safari park, which was an excellent achievement for them. Their social worker said that the staff have high expectations even when they seem difficult to achieve.

Staff support the young person to build skills that will help them in their adult life. The staff and manager set realistic goals that are regularly reviewed. The young person has made great progress with baking, personal care and independence skills. These skills will help them greatly as they enter adulthood.

The young person is supported to learn about healthy choices, such as food and exercise. They are taking part in an exercise programme that has helped them make progress with their physical well-being.

Staff take the young person to visit family for an overnight stay every weekend. The young person's parent said, 'Staff go above and beyond to help. I am grateful for their support.'

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

The young person's plans are clear and this helps staff to provide predictable and consistent care. This is very important for the young person, as it helps them to feel safe.

There is a high staffing ratio, so staff are always available for the young person. The young person does not go missing from the home. However, the staff have individual safety plans that give clear directions. Proactive planning ensures that the young person receives well-thought-out care that is not reactive.

Young people can engage in self-injurious behaviour. There are plans in place to support staff with this. Staff use distraction techniques very well and are often able to quickly support children to move past this behaviour.

The young person is not given any negative consequences. Staff try to understand what is behind the behaviour and look for any patterns that may offer insight into this. This is in line with a trauma-informed way of working. This overarching theme of the organisation is fully upheld by the staff.

The young person has access to a wide range of specialist help, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and clinical support. This helps them to receive holistic care that is targeted to their individual needs. The speech and language therapist and the occupational therapist highlighted the proactive approach taken by the manager. They said that the staff know the young person well and that this has helped the young person to feel safe and secure. They can see a marked improvement in how well the young person is doing since the new manager took over.

There have been occasions when staff have had to physically intervene to help to keep the young person and others safe. Records for this are descriptive and give a good understanding of the event. Staff debriefs always occur. However, the young person's views are not always clear in the records.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a new manager in post. She is in the process of registering with Ofsted and has started her level 5 diploma. She has worked for the company for some time and has relevant experience. She is dedicated to her role and to ensuring young people receive good-quality care.

There were a significant amount of agency staff used last year. Since taking over, the new manager has built a small consistent core team. The manager works shifts to make sure the young person has familiar staff. Agency staff are rarely used.

The manager knows the young person very well. She role models good practice to her staff. There has been a decline in behavioural incidents in the last few months. This relates to the positive changes being made by the manager.

Staff are positive about the manager and the progress of the team since she has taken over. Staff receive regular supervision sessions. They said that the manager is approachable and fair. Staff can see the positive impact on the young person. The manager has been central in devising a new healthy living plan for the young person to support the recommendations from the young person's health review.

The manager has devised a system that helps her to continuously monitor and review the quality of care provided. This is shared with the members of the senior leadership team to provide them with oversight. The manager has created a thorough development plan, which is kept under regular review.

The manager has developed positive relationships with the young person's social worker and parents. She has received positive feedback about her communication skills. These relationships help to provide the young person with quality care planning.

Staff have taken part in a variety of training, including autism training, which was a requirement last year. However, one staff member who should have achieved the required level 3 qualification is yet to do so. This requirement has been restated.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
For the purposes of paragraph (3)(b), an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification if, by the relevant date, the individual has attained— the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("the Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. The relevant date is— in the case of an individual who starts working in a care role in a home after 1st April 2014, the date which falls 2 years after the date on which the individual started working in a care role in a home; or in the case of an individual who was working in a care role in a home on 1st April 2014, 1st April 2016. The registered person may defer the relevant date if the individual— does not work, or has not worked, in a care role in a home for a prolonged period; or works, or has worked, in a care role in a home on a part-time basis. (Regulation 32 (4)(a)(b) (5)(a)(b) (6)(a)(b)) This requirement was made at the last two inspections and has been restated.	2 September 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases, children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than 5 days after the incident of restraint. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 50 paragraph 9.60)

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: 2642116

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Norfolk Limited

Registered provider address: Atria, Spa Road, Bolton BL1 4AG

Responsible individual: Jaya Wright

Registered manager: Mikaela Leaf

Inspector

Mary Costello, Social Care Inspector

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