

2688749

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 four children with autism and/or learning disabilities. It is operated by a national provider. There are three children living at the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2022.

The home is in the grounds of an independent school. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 July 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: 19 April 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/04/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This inspection was brought forward in order to address specific concerns received by Ofsted.

At the time of the inspection, three children were living at the home and present at the inspection. Two of the children were spoken to, and provided positive feedback about their experiences. Since the last inspection, one child has moved in, and one child has moved on from the home. Children make progress from their starting points and are provided with good-quality care to meet their individual needs.

Parents and social workers highlight the positive difference that staff support has made to children's well-being and independence. This children make progress in managing their health needs, increasing their self-care skills and managing their emotions.

All of the children have tailored education plans. The staff actively encourage children with their learning. Staff help children to achieve high attendance at school by maintaining consistent and familiar routines. Residential staff work closely with the school staff to ensure any gaps in learning for children are reduced.

Staff support children's daily health needs. They follow detailed and up-to-date plans for children. This includes working closely with dieticians and specialist health teams to meet children's complex health needs. Collaborative working has meant that one child has made progress to the extent that their medication is now significantly reduced. For another child, well-planned support has led to the child making substantial steps forward in meeting the goals set out in their individual diet plan.

Children take part in activities that reflect their interests. Children regularly enjoy going to the cinema, an animal park and swimming at the local leisure centre. Two children recently visited theme parks. This range of varied of activities ensures children participate in new experiences and helps them to develop their friendships with each other.

All children have access to an independent advocate who visits the home regularly. Children take part in frequent and well-planned house meetings and one-to-one discussions with staff. Children's views are explored and understood by staff.

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

Children say that they feel safe living at the home and have good relationships with staff. Children understand that they can speak to staff if they are worried or upset.

Staff actively follow detailed and responsive risk management plans for children. They are skilled in using de-escalation techniques and understand how to address children's

emotional needs. Staff use incentives to reinforce positive behaviour. As a result, difficult incidents involving children are reduced.

Children learn about their personal safety through well organised meetings with staff. These include discussing topics such as, healthy relationships, online safety and exploring their individuality and sexuality. This improves children's knowledge of their personal safety.

Staff use physical interventions and negative consequences infrequently and as a last resort. Leaders and managers review the use of these interventions to identify trends and learning points to support informed and safe practice.

Generally, staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and have a good knowledge of children's additional vulnerabilities. Most staff are familiar with the whistle-blowing procedures. However, on one occasion, a staff member did not report a concern about poor staff practice without delay. This meant that leaders and managers could not promptly provide the necessary safeguards to protect children.

Leaders and managers conduct thorough investigations into staff practice when required. However, on two occasions there has been a delay in referring staff practice concerns to the local authority designated officer. This has meant that on these occasions, external oversight was not sought when it should have been. This deviates from the safeguarding procedures.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and working towards a relevant level 5 qualification. She leads staff confidently alongside a newly appointed responsible individual. Leaders, managers and the staff team have a strong understanding of children's needs. They demonstrate a commitment to provide good-quality care.

Staff are positive about the support that they receive and enjoy working at the home. Staff, including agency staff, value their personal development discussions and supervision sessions. Probation reviews and annual appraisals provide staff with opportunities to reflect on their goals and practice. Regular staff meetings ensure that effective communication and good support are embedded.

The manager has developed comprehensive monitoring and review systems to reflect on children's lived experiences at the home and identify areas for future learning. This includes detailed case studies for each child. This helps the manager to improve their understanding of the strengths and developmental areas in the support provided at the home.

Leaders and managers carefully consider which children stay at the home together. Meticulous planning has ensured that one child received a warm welcome and quickly settled into established routines when they recently moved into the home.

Leaders and managers ensure that there are suitable staff induction processes for new staff. Some staff have requested additional training around the specialist model of support provided at the home. The manager has planned additional sessions for staff, but these have not yet taken place.

Although leaders and managers have responded adequately to safeguarding concerns, they have not always notified Ofsted as required and within a reasonable time frame. This means that Ofsted's ability to monitor safeguards during these times has been reduced.

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, 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
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(v)(vi)) In particular; ensure that staff fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities and report any concerns immediately and in accordance with the safeguarding policy. ensure that referrals to the local authority designated officer are made without delay.	30 August 2024
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(c)(e))	30 August 2024

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all staff can access suitable resources to support their training needs. In particular, that staff attend training in specialist therapeutic approaches outlined in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: 2688749

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: Erin Kennedy

Inspectors

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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