

2742259

Registered provider: Ancora Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private company. It provides care for up to three children who experience social and emotional difficulties and/or have learning disabilities.

At the time of this inspection, two children were living at the home.

The manager was appointed in August 2025 and has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 January 2026

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: 10 April 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/04/2024	Full	Good
16/08/2023	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Since the last inspection, 6 children have moved into the home and 4 have moved out. Of the 4 children who moved out, 3 moved in a planned and positive manner, indicative of the progress they made while living at the home. Another child moved out, having refused to return to the home. Both children living at the home at the time of this inspection spoke to the inspector.

Staff regularly seek children's views and involve them in decisions about the home. Children share their views in different ways, including during weekly house meetings where they can contribute as a group. After house meetings, staff also speak with each child individually to gather their views about the home. Staff record children's views in consultation records so children can see what they have asked for and what action has been taken. Children also have access to an independent advocate. This helps children feel heard and reassures them that adults take their views seriously.

Staff help children develop positive relationships and a sense of belonging in the home. Both children said they get along well with staff and enjoy spending time together. Staff encourage children to participate in activities that reflect their individual interests. Staff also plan activities in the home, such as quiz nights and learning about food from different cultures. These shared experiences support children in building positive connections with staff and peers. This helps children feel settled and valued in the home.

Staff encourage children to develop and maintain relationships with the people who are important to them. This supports children's identity and emotional wellbeing. One significant person spoke positively about the support provided by staff. They said that this has contributed to the child's increased stability and progress.

The home environment is welcoming and personalised. Children's photos, artwork and certificates are displayed around the home, celebrating their achievements and helping them feel valued. This helps children to develop pride in themselves and feel that they are an important part of the home.

Staff help children make progress with their education. One child has completed their GCSEs and is now attending college. The child has clear aspirations for their future. For another child, attendance at school has been a concern. Staff work with the child and education professionals to understand the reasons for this. Staff help the child to develop practical tools and strategies to manage barriers to attendance. This helps children to engage with education and work towards their future goals.

Staff support children in accessing services that promote their health and wellbeing. One child spoke about how staff helped them to cease vaping. Another child is engaging with substance misuse services with staff's encouragement. Staff also educated children about the support available from other health services, such as sexual health clinics.

Children have benefited from access to the home's in-house therapist to support their mental health. This helps children understand their health needs and access the right support to help them make positive changes.

Children have support plans that give staff clear guidance on how to care for them. However, for one child, several plans contained incorrect information. This could create confusion for staff and cause the child unnecessary distress, particularly if they access their records.

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

Staff manage incidents well and respond in a way that promotes children's safety. Staff follow children's support plans and take appropriate actions to reduce risk. Leaders and managers follow up thoroughly after incidents. Debriefs are held with staff and children. The manager then carries out a reflective review of incidents to consider what worked well and what staff may do differently in the future. This allows them to reflect on the causes of behaviour and identify learning to prevent similar incidents in the future. This helps children benefit from consistent, thoughtful support that promotes safety and positive behaviour.

Staff help children manage their emotions and behaviours safely without the need for physical intervention. Staff receive training in physical intervention and understand that it must only be used as a last resort. Staff use de-escalation strategies and consistent boundaries to help children regulate. This helps children experience calm care and keeps them safe.

Staff support children's behaviour through encouragement and positive reinforcement. Staff do not routinely use consequences. Instead, they focus on helping children identify and repeat positive behaviours. Children use reward charts to work towards agreed goals and receive rewards when they achieve them. Staff celebrate children's achievements through praise and recognition. This helps children build self-esteem and make positive choices in a supportive way.

Following incidents, children participate in meetings with staff. These provide opportunities for children to reflect on what has happened. Children also participate in regular planned one-to-one sessions. These cover topics such as emotional wellbeing, healthy coping strategies, staying safe in the community, safe relationships, consent and boundaries. These sessions help children learn how to stay safe and make positive decisions. Staff also encourage children to access the organisation's training resources to build skills and understanding. Children have accessed training on topics such as first aid, food hygiene, anti-bullying and what to expect at court. In response to a specific concern, a child received relevant training. This helped the child understand the subject and reduced the associated risk. These approaches help children understand risk and develop strategies to protect themselves.

Children rarely go missing from the home. When this has happened, staff have responded promptly and in line with missing-from-home protocols. Staff take appropriate

action, including searching for children and keeping relevant professionals updated. Staff welcome children back to the home in a warm and supportive way. This helps reduce risks to children while they are missing and supports their safe return.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A suitably qualified and experienced manager leads the home. The home has had three managers since registration. Leaders have promoted managers from the team, and senior leaders have maintained oversight throughout. This has helped to provide continuity and stability. These changes have not negatively impacted the children. The manager is proud of the achievements of staff and children.

Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment procedures to help protect children. Recruitment records show that appropriate checks are carried out before staff begin work. This helps to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and that they are cared for by safe and trusted adults.

Leaders and managers provide effective oversight of practice. They regularly monitor important areas of practice, including incidents, one-to-one sessions and record-keeping. Leaders and managers carry out reflective reviews and identify areas for improvement. They use what they learn from this oversight to strengthen guidance for staff and improve day-to-day practice. This supports consistent standards and helps ensure that children receive safe and appropriate care.

Staff receive regular opportunities for supervision, reflection and shared learning. In addition to individual supervision sessions, staff also receive single-point supervision sessions. These sessions focus on policies and procedures to check staff's understanding and what this means in practice. Staff benefit from regular team meetings and consultations with an in-house therapist. This helps give staff therapeutic insight into children's behaviours and supports staff in reflecting on practice. Staff discuss significant incidents during team meetings and review children's risk assessments. Leaders and managers also use team meetings to focus on a 'policy of the month' so that key expectations remain clear. This supports consistent staff practice and helps to ensure that key messages are shared with the team.

Leaders and managers invest in staff training and development. Staff access a range of training that the provider deems mandatory and that reflects children's individual needs. Leaders and managers also support staff in developing their skills and qualifications. For example, staff are working towards level 5 diplomas. This helps to build a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

Leaders and managers support staff wellbeing and promote a stable staff team. Staff provided positive feedback about working at the home. They said they feel listened to and valued. They describe leaders and managers as 'supportive' and 'approachable'. Leaders and managers support staff wellbeing through regular debriefs and access to pastoral support. Staff also feel invested in and speak positively about opportunities to

develop and progress their careers. The staff team is stable, and staff retention is strong. This helps provide children with continuity of care.

Leaders and managers promote effective communication with external professionals. Feedback from professionals is positive. They praise the level of communication from the home and say they are always kept updated about incidents and significant information. This supports the wider multi-agency team's understanding of children and the support they require.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that staff are familiar with the home's policies on record-keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. In particular, ensure that all plans for children are clear and detail the correct information in a concise and factual way. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

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: 2742259

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ancora Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 8 Madeira Avenue, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS9 3EB

Responsible individual: Wendy Edward-Tsuro

Registered manager: Dani Ariola

Inspector

Emilja Myers, Social Care Inspector

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