

SC014848

Assurance visit

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by a private company that also runs a school. It provides accommodation for up to six children. The service also provides individual children with support from therapists.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since August 2020.

Visit dates: 8 to 9 December 2020

Previous inspection date: 3 July 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children have positive relationships with staff that enable them to feel safe. All children have a link worker and know who to go to if they are feeling upset or angry. Staff support children well and they are always available to offer a space to talk. Children take it in turns to cook and staff support them with this. Staff do not take over, instead they ask what they can do to help. This helps children to develop and progress at their own rate.

Staff understand the children's need to keep in touch with their families. Staff supported children to use technology during the COVID 19 lockdown and have promoted face-to-face contact effectively as restrictions have lifted. Children spoke positively about the support that they receive to see their families.

Staff understand and are responsive to children's views. Children have opportunities to express these views in several ways, for example through questionnaires and house meetings. The manager is committed to responding to children's views and will at times respond directly to a child, giving reasons why a suggested change is not possible.

Staff promote the physical and mental health needs of children effectively and work closely with a range of professionals to support these. Staff support children to see therapists as well as other specialists. Staff recognise the possible impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on relationships. They encourage children to build positive relationships and support children to manage these when they are not going well.

The staff team is committed to supporting the children to succeed in education. Staff encourage children to attend school or college and have also supported children when seeking apprenticeships. Staff attend school meetings virtually and work closely with virtual schools to secure suitable education placements.

The safety of children

Staff understand how to manage risk and how to keep children safe. Staff recognise the risks related to each child and respond accordingly. Staff have dealt with incidents of self-harm effectively and very clear processes are in place to support children through these incidents.

Staff understand the effective missing from care procedure that is in place. This means that staff know how to respond when a child goes missing. Staff confidently use a grab bag which has all the effects that they will need when out looking for a child, for example money and travel cards. However, such is the understanding of risk that this home has experienced very few missing episodes.

Staff feel well prepared and supported to manage challenging situations and behaviours effectively. Staff are confident in the training available to them. They support each other and have access to management for support where needed.

Clear and consistent boundaries are in place. They contribute to a feeling of well-being and children say that they feel safe and protected.

Staff show an excellent understanding of the potential impact of abuse and neglect and respond appropriately. Feedback from social workers shows that the staff understand the individual needs of the children and respond appropriately, for example understanding a child's attachment needs and providing the care and nurturing that had been missing from her life.

Leaders and managers

A registered manager has been in place since August 2020. A very experienced senior management team supports her.

Clear plans are in place that are reviewed as and when needed. As restrictions eased, it meant that children could have more freedom, for example in terms of external activities, access to friends, family, and education facilities. However, some areas of social and educational lives are still affected by the restrictions, and managers ensure that staff are supported to meet these needs.

Leaders and managers actively use the findings from monitoring to improve the experiences of children. The manager takes feedback from children to team meetings and there is discussion of how things can be improved. The registered manager responds directly to children following their feedback, which ensures that they are aware of their voice being heard.

Children said that sometimes staff do not pass on information or actions from their shift, which means that things get forgotten.

Positive partnership working is in place. There are strong partnerships with the local police and specialist agencies. The registered manager was able to promote the needs of a child in her care through requesting additional funding for one-to-one support successfully.

Staff receive scheduled supervision which ensures that there is regular review of their work while also providing space for reflection. All staff have received appraisals, despite the challenges of the restrictions. A detailed induction plan is in place. Training continues in a variety of formats to ensure that there is continued and effective staff development.

Leaders and managers have worked to ensure that there is enough staff to meet children's individual needs. This had been a challenge earlier this year and there was the use of bank staff. Bank staff are not used as often now and there has recently been a recruiting drive to fill vacancies.

Leaders and managers have responded well to the recommendations made at the last inspection and, as a result, new staff receive a well-organised induction. Staff receive regular supervision and ongoing continual professional development. In addition, staff have received appraisals by leaders and managers.

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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(e)(f)) This particularly refers to the quality of handovers that ensures all relevant information about children is shared with staff.	30 January 2021

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC014848

Registered provider: Cornerways Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: Ashcombe Court, Woolsack Way, Godalming,
Surrey GU7 1LQ

Responsible individual: Johanna Davys

Registered manager: Amanda Castles

Inspector

Vevene Muhammad, Social Care Inspector

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