

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023646
Inspector	Lucy Chapman
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Acorn Homes (UK) Limited
Registered person address	424 Margate Road Westwood Ramsgate Kent CT12 6SJ
Responsible individual	David Laurie Knowles
Registered manager	Tiffany Jane Healy
Date of last inspection	04/03/2014

Inspection date	05/03/2015
Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

An experienced and suitably qualified manager leads a stable staff team in this home. An additional member of staff has joined the team recently, enhancing the established staff team. New staff receive thorough induction and ongoing training. The previous inspection highlighted that not all staff appraisals were up to date. A new diary system for appraisals is now in place, and staff appraisals will take place annually. This will ensure that staff performance is monitored and that staff are equipped to support and care for the young people in this home.

Staff have participated in training around child sexual exploitation and online safety, with plans for trained staff to deliver this training to young people. This means that staff caring for young people will have up to date knowledge and awareness of child sexual exploitation and online safety, enabling them to keep young people safe and to inform young people of how to keep safe.

The previous inspection highlighted that equality and diversity training of some staff required updating. This has been addressed, and all staff are booked to attend a full day equality and diversity training course. The management team of this home take training seriously resulting in a well-trained and knowledgeable staff team equipped to care for young people with complex emotional and behavioural needs.

The building is spacious providing adequate communal space including a large reception room and dining room. Young people living in this home have opportunities to undertake communal activities and to spend time alone. Young people's bedrooms were well furnished and decorated to their individual tastes. Redecoration of the communal areas was taking place at the time of inspection so the lounge was not in a furnished homely state.

Young people say that they like living in this home and comment especially on the

good relationships they have established with staff. One young person said 'you see yourself like you're in a big family you've never had before'.

Young people make good progress in this home. The last inspection highlighted that some young people who were awaiting a school placement lacked structure to their day. This has been addressed and staff follow up educational issues proactively. Where recently placed young people are awaiting a school placement one to one tutoring is in place and staff undertake structured activities with young people during school hours. All young people are now engaged with education and are making educational progress. One young person said of their educational progress 'It's good, I'm really enjoying it, I'm starting to get better at maths, before I didn't enjoy it because I couldn't do it'.

Young people are registered with health services to meet their individual needs. A health and wellbeing team are available to offer advice to staff in their work with young people, and to support young people directly with health issues. Young people with a history of self-harm receive emotional support and alternative constructive outlets for their emotions, resulting in a reduction in self-harming behaviour. Staff promote physical and emotional wellbeing through linking young people with activities that they enjoy, these include junior gym, football, drama, singing and seaside walks and bike rides. Young people receive the physical and mental health services that they require; this means that they make positive progress in all aspects of their health.

In respect of behaviour management, staff establish clear and consistent boundaries that young people respond to. Keywork sessions encourage young people to talk about and reflect upon their behaviour and individualised rewards for positive behaviour are in place. One young person said 'when I was at home I was really naughty and wouldn't listen to anyone, I do listen to people now, I never used to in the past'. Any sanctions or physical interventions are appropriately applied, well recorded, include young people's comment and are consistently reviewed by the manager. This means that young people's behaviour is well managed and develops positively when they have settled in this home.

Good safeguarding policies and procedures are in place within this home and staff receive regular and updated safeguarding training. This ensures that staff have a good understanding in respect of safeguarding young people and clear guidance to follow where safeguarding concerns arise. Safeguarding concerns are actioned appropriately; however one recent notifiable event lacked written records of the follow up and outcome. Safeguarding provision within the home is responsive to young people's needs. For example, a waking night staff member has been introduced to meet the current needs of young people. Young people understand and appreciate the safeguarding systems in place. One young person said 'I feel safe; all the alarms go on at night so I know I'll be safe'. Health and safety records for the home are up to date and all young people have completed a fire drill recently. Trained staff administer medication and the medication book is well

completed and up to date. Young people in this home are cared for with a high consideration for their safety across all areas.

Young people's case files are clear, well recorded and up to date. Each young person has an individualised placement plan, risk assessment and behaviour plan in place. Young people are encouraged to read and sign these key documents. This means that staff are working with up to date information for each child to inform their care and support. Staff link with external services to build a support package around each child that meets their need. Recent links with a local voluntary organisation provide one young person with specific advice and support in respect of child sexual exploitation. This proactive approach enables young people to make progress in their areas of vulnerability.

A missing persons log and complaints log are in place, however no young people have been reported missing and there have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Young people are able to contribute ideas to some areas of day to day life and regularly contribute to meal menu planning. Young peoples' house meetings are held infrequently, this means that young people are not regularly empowered to give their ideas and that their contribution to decision making within the home is limited.

All recommendations and requirements from the previous inspection have been implemented. The recommendation in respect of creating a comfortable and homely environment is repeated as the programme for redecoration is being progressed.

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately run. It is registered to accommodate and provide care for up to 8 young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
17/10/2013	Full	good
26/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
01/08/2012	Full	adequate

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated (NMS 10.3)
- ensure a written record is kept which includes details of the action taken, and the outcome of any action or investigation, following a notifiable event (NMS 24.2)
- ensure children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day to day running of the home and important decisions or changes in the child's life, unless this is contrary to their interests (NMS 1.1)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.