

SC472139

Registered provider: Amegreen Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is part of a private organisation and provides care for up to two children. The home provides care to give them the opportunity to come to terms with previous experiences of trauma, abuse, loss, rejection and poor attachments.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 5 August 2020.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 July 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 30 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
14/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
04/09/2017	Full	Good
13/12/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in all areas of their life from the point they move into the home. Staff provide children with clear structure and boundaries to help them settle. The staff's therapeutic approach means that they provide thoughtful care that is well informed by a good understanding of the children's individual needs and circumstances. This helps children to feel secure and provides a good base for them to make progress.

Staff impress clear expectations on the children with regard to their school attendance. One child, who is due to move to secondary school, spoke positively about the support she has received from staff to help her adjust and prepare for her new school. Staff develop positive relationships with each child's school, and they preserve excellent communication channels with teachers and learning support assistants. The headteacher of one school was exceptionally complimentary regarding the relationship she has with staff at the home and how they are supporting a child to improve their engagement with learning.

Children receive support to improve their reading skills during protected time before school and at bedtime to read stories. During the inspection one child was very excited to show off how she has been learning to tell the time. Staff celebrate children's educational successes and reward them for doing well. This ensures the children feel confident about learning.

Staff understand the children's needs and offer them appropriate affection and care. Children are involved with creating menus that help them to try new foods. They enjoy home-cooked and nutritious meals.

Children's care plans contain long-term goals for them to work towards. These goals are developed in consultation with the organisation's clinical psychologist.

Staff have high aspirations for children and encourage them to participate in a wide range of activities that give them the opportunity to be adventurous. This promotes the children's resilience and gives them the confidence to try new things. This also provides opportunities for them to improve their relationships with each other and enjoy new experiences together.

The garden at the home provides the children with a safe space to have fun. They enjoy playing on the trampoline and in the paddling pool together. The home has its own equine centre which the children attend. During this time, they practice their horse care and riding skills.

Children are in good health and have access to local and specialist health services. They receive good support from staff to understand the changes that take place in their minds and bodies, as they reach adolescence.

Feedback from the children's placing authorities is very positive with regards to the care provided by staff and the positive outcomes for the children who are living in the home.

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

Staff are thoughtful in the way they plan for children who are moving into the home, and take time to build positive relationships. This enables them to feel comfortable about moving into the house. Each child has a trusted adult they can seek support from and talk to about any worries. Key workers who are allocated to oversee children's care plans and engage children in life-space-interviews make every effort to make sure that they understand children's wishes and feelings.

Staff provide children with clear routines throughout the day. The children benefit from a caring and nurturing approach that helps them to feel secure and cared for.

There is a positive safeguarding culture at the home. The previous registered manager and responsible individual understand child protection procedures and immediately share any concerns with the children's placing authority and their own designated officer. Some staff, including some senior members, are not familiar with safeguarding policies and procedures. This has the potential to delay the recording and reporting of any concerns.

Staff support each other during shift handovers and team meetings to put measures in place that reduce the risk of harm to the children. In practice they understand the vulnerabilities of children well and provide the support and supervision that they need to stay safe. However, children's risk assessments are not individualised. They do not focus on individual risks and behaviours or set out clear actions that staff should take to address any concerns. Staff do not always complete risk assessments for community activities. When they do, they are generic and do not fully consider the risks to individual children. The recording does not underpin the good care practice by ensuring staff are fully informed and accountable for consistently implementing safety plans.

Staff have not undertaken recent training in relation to understanding the risks presented to children by the internet and social media. Children do not have any unsupervised access to devices that are connected to the internet and therefore there are no concerns that these children are currently exposed to any risk of harm. Given that the children will, at some point,

need to access the internet, it is not clear from their care plans how they will be supported to learn to do this safely.

Staff seldom use physical intervention and only do so as a last resort, to prevent harm occurring. The manager's review of incidents where physical intervention has been used does not always consider whether the threshold for using this intervention is met, and does not always demonstrate that key details of the incident have been considered to inform learning. However, senior managers provide additional scrutiny of serious incidents and this provides an additional level of protection to ensure safe practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Following the recent resignation of the registered manager, the home does not have a registered manager or permanent leader employed to provide the staff team with effective leadership and management. The responsible individual has taken immediate action to identify a suitably qualified manager to undertake the manager's role.

The responsible individual ensures the home is maintained to a high standard. Children live in an environment that is personalised to their tastes. The house looks and feels like a family home.

There are sufficient suitably experienced staff in place to meet the needs of the children. However, not all staff have the skills and qualifications to complete their role effectively. For example, one senior staff member was unable to describe how to raise concerns with external professionals. Some staff have failed to keep up to date with their mandatory training including first aid and physical intervention techniques. This means that some staff are not confident in de-escalating confrontation with children.

Managers and staff receive frequent supervision. The emotional impact on staff working in the home is recognised by the supervisor. Practice-related concerns are not always recorded effectively, and actions are not consistently followed up to ensure completion of identified tasks, designed to support staff development. This means that the leadership team at the home faces a challenge to ensure effective staffing combinations when planning rotas.

Children's care planning is effective. Placement plans identify children's individual needs and list their individual strengths. Children's case records reflect their lived experience and their wishes and feelings are taken into consideration and acted upon. Management monitoring to determine the impact of staff practice on children's overall progress is not consistent or recorded effectively. This makes it difficult for managers and key workers to fully understand the levels of progress and achievements the children are making.

Leaders and managers have not engaged in regularly monitoring the quality of care provided for the children. The regulation 45 report has not been submitted to Ofsted within the required time frame. The manager's review of the quality of care provided for children does not identify the home's strengths and weaknesses and therefore does not promote service development.

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— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(v)(vii)(b)) In particular, ensure that individual risk assessments are updated and that trips and activities are risk assessed.	30 September 2021
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child;	30 September 2021

ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care to each child; use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(c)(d)(e)(h))	
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. After completing a quality of care review, the registered person must produce a written report about the quality of care review and the actions which the registered person intends to take as a result of the quality of care review ("the quality of care review report"). The registered person must— supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed. (Regulation 45 (1) (2)(a)(b) (3) (4)(a))	30 September 2021

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: SC472139

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Amegreen Children's Services Limited

Registered provider address: 2 Granary Court, Fair Oak Green, Stratfield Saye, Reading RG7 2DL

Responsible individual: Gary Carlin

Registered manager: Mary Henry

Inspectors

Paul Thomas, Social Care Inspector
Sara Stoker, Social Care Inspector

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