

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 three children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The manager is not yet registered with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2022

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: 21 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2021	Full	Good
30/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
14/08/2018	Full	Outstanding
04/09/2017	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive individualised nurturing care. Children quickly settle and begin to form trusting relationships with the staff. One child said, 'I love it here, I get to do a lot of things that I like.'

Children's school attendance is low. To address this, staff are working with the school staff and other professionals to provide home-based educational sessions to help to bridge the gap in children's learning. In addition, children attend horse-riding therapy, where they engage in academic lessons to help them deal with their anxieties in a smaller and relaxed environment.

Staff support children to address their physical and emotional needs. They work alongside dietitians and the child and adolescence mental health service to help children manage their emotions and feelings. This combination of care has resulted in children making progress in their emotional health. For example, one child who struggled with food is now involved in a healthy and balanced menu planning, and takes pleasure in cooking food for everyone in the home. The child said, 'I love cooking for everyone, and I cook really well.'

Children can talk to staff openly and share their thoughts, feelings and wishes through key-work sessions, debriefs and daily conversations. Staff do not shy away from engaging in difficult conversations with the children. As a result, children feel assured that they have people around them who care about them.

Children enjoy taking part in a variety of activities. Children enjoy going on holidays together, playing bowling and completing artwork in the home, which is proudly displayed.

Children are supported to develop independent skills suitable to their age and capabilities. They do their own laundry, clean most areas of the home, complete food budgets and take part in the weekly shopping. As a result, children are gaining essential life skills.

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

Staff ensure that risk assessments are clear and individualised to reflect children's needs and vulnerabilities.

Some children have on occasions gone missing from the home, school and while out in the community. Staff work collaboratively with other agencies to search and bring children back home safely. Exceptional communication and multi-agency work have helped professionals to minimise the risks.

Physical restraint is used as a last resort. When children struggle to manage their feelings and emotions, staff use de-escalation techniques that help children to self-regulate their feelings and emotions. Restraint reports are well documented. However, one child's assessment does not provide clear instructions on how staff should support a child when they make threats to seriously hurt themselves.

Leaders and managers do not always adhere to safer recruitment processes. There are shortfalls in obtaining staff references from previous employers and interview processes do not carefully explore staff capabilities, nor provide effective grading to evidence the quality of interviews. As a result, stringent measures are not taken to ensure that suitable people work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new manager is making positive changes to the home. The manager has implemented clear plans aimed at improving children's care and is ensuring that staff are given clear direction and coaching to raise standards.

Staff receive regular supervision and debriefs. This protective space enables staff to talk openly about any issues. One member of staff said, 'My manager is very fair and structured, and I am very thankful to be working with her.' Despite this good practice, some staff are not provided with all the required training to assist them in keeping children safe. This impairs their ability to effectively safeguard children.

When serious incidents occur, appropriate action is taken. However, not all serious incidents are appropriately notified to Ofsted. This hinders the regulator having oversight of the service between inspections.

The manager will challenge other professionals in the best interest of children. For example, when a child continued to have a different social worker, the manager raised a concern with the child's placing local authority.

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; help each child to understand how to keep safe; have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other; 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; and are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1) (2)(a)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)) In particular, the manager must ensure the staff have clear plans for how to support children when their behaviours escalate into crisis management.	30 September 2022
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	30 September 2022

promotes their welfare In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13 (1) (2)(c)) This relates to staff receiving all required training.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a child which the registered person considers to be serious; there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(b)(c))	30 September 2022
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that— the individual is of integrity and good character; the individual has the appropriate experience, qualification and skills for the work that the individual is to perform; the individual is mentally and physically fit for the purposes of the work that the individual is to perform; and full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. The registered person may permit an individual to start work at the home despite the fact that the requirement in paragraph (3)(d) has not been met if— the registered person has taken all reasonable steps to obtain full information about each of the matters in Schedule 2 in respect of the individual, but the enquiries in relation to any of the matters in paragraphs 3 to 6 of Schedule 2 are incomplete. Regulation 32 (1) (3)(b)(d) (7)(a)	30 September 2022

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: The Courtyard, Sulhamstead Abbots, Sulhamstead
RG7 4EE

Responsible individual: Rachel Redgwell

Home manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Alphie Khumalo, Social Care Inspector

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