

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC472164
Inspector	Emeline Evans
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Amegreen Children's Services Limited
Registered person address	2 Granary Court Fair Oak Green, Stratfield Saye READING RG7 2DL
Responsible individual	Gary James Carlin
Registered manager	Linda Gaye Bursnall
Date of last inspection	11/11/2013

Inspection date	14/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good
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**.

Since the last inspection, the home has experienced a change with the group dynamics in the home. The transitions have been managed remarkably well by staff and this is clearly a strength of the service. Professionals comment, 'the transition process is very good, thorough and well planned.' There have been recent admissions to the home, which have resulted in new challenges for the staff team. Staff have worked with professionals and each other to support the young people and enable them to reflect on challenging behaviours and adapt to group living.

Three young people have left the home since the last inspection. All were very well facilitated planned moves. One was for the young person to be with a more suitable peer group. Staff supported his transition to another home within the organisation. He is reported to have 'flourished' since this move. The home worked closely with the placing authority to ensure the welfare of the young person was a priority. The other two young people very recently moved to a foster placement. This was a very positive move for the young people. Comments from the foster carers and social worker include, 'the home has done a great job with the young people in caring for them and preparing them for foster care', and 'the team ensured a smooth transition for both the young people and the foster carers.'

Staff set clear boundaries and young people know what is expected of them. As a result, young people continue to benefit from a child-centred approach from the staff team. One young person commented, 'it is good here and we get to go out lots.' Young people are starting to develop close relationships with the staff team and describe them as, 'really good' and 'I like them'. A professional described the care as 'fantastic.'

Since the last inspection policies and procedures have been updated and now include guidance for staff in respect of child sexual exploitation. Staff are involved in

a comprehensive training schedule which they are complementary about, however staff currently do not undertake any training in child sexual exploitation. Supervision takes place regularly and the manager had revised the content; this is now of good quality and reflects the discussion and topics covered.

The staff are skilled at promoting a nurturing environment where young people are and feel safe and well cared for. The staff team are consistent in their approach and effectively engage with young people to promote positive behaviour. As a result the use of sanctions is minimal. Following a recent admission there have been a high number of restraints since the last inspection. There has been clear management oversight of these incidents with triggers and patterns focused on. There is evidence there has been a reduction of physical interventions in recent weeks and staff are consistently using individualised strategies to decrease challenging behaviours. The records in relation to physical interventions cross reference to incident sheets. However, the records do not consistently contain young people's views and comments. Records demonstrate the restraint was proportionate and necessary to prevent significant harm to others or damage to the property. Risk assessments relating to positive handling now include what strategies will be used to minimise the identified risk. This practice ensures consistency within the team. Due to the challenges presented by a young person, items were removed from his bedroom including his curtains. These have not been replaced for a number of months. The bedroom therefore feels sparse and not very comfortable.

The suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager effectively leads the enthusiastic staff team. Staff are confident in their roles and key workers well informed on the needs and progress of their key child. The monitoring systems in place continue to review the quality of care that young people receive and identify areas where outcomes for young people may be improved. However, the internal monitoring taking place by the manager does not reflect the changes in regulation and it is not clear if young people's views are sought during this process; this is not clearly evidenced and reflected upon within the reports. Therefore, shortfalls in the care of young people may not be fully recognised and addressed. There is a comprehensive development plan in operation. However, this details what the home has achieved in recent months and there is insufficient focus on the future. The two requirements made in the previous inspection report have been met. The policy and procedure for the recruitment and vetting of staff is now consistently followed. Staff do not commence work until the appropriate checks have been returned. Rotas on display now reflect the deployment of staff in the home.

Information about this children's home

This privately owned service accommodates up to four young people of mixed gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/11/2013	Full	good

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 6 to improves the quality of care provided in the children's home and this provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1)(a)and (3))	28/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home when restraint is used (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure all areas of the home are comfortable and homely. In particular

bedrooms have curtains (NMS 10.3)

- ensure the staff are equipped with the skills to meet the needs of the children. In particular, this relates to training in child sexual exploitation. (NMS 18.1)

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.