

SC472164

Registered provider: Amegreen Children's Services Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned service accommodates up to four children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The provider operates three other homes in the local area.

The home uses systems-centred methods of working with children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma. Children and young people have access to equine therapy with the organisation's own horses.

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 May 2018

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	outstanding
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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: 17 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2016	Full	Good
25/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/11/2015	Full	Good
22/07/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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
45: Review of quality of care (2) In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— (b) the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45(2)(b)) In particular, the registered manager must demonstrate how the views of young people contribute to the quality care review process and how their views inform service development.	16/01/2019

Recommendations

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The record should provide evidence that the supervision is delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61 paragraph 13.3)
- Review the home's behaviour management plans and sanctions policy to ensure that they are consistent with the trauma development informed model of care as set out in the home's statement of purpose. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15 paragraph 3.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make excellent progress and feel settled at this home due to the nurturing care and the thoughtful interventions that staff provide. Young people who have struggled to settle in previous care placements, now feel settled and at home. They describe their experience of living in the home in glowing terms. One young person said, 'I would recommend any young person to come here.' Another young person reported that staff cared for him well and taught him how to behave.

Placing social workers described how staff are 'doing a fantastic job'. They consistently reported that young people benefited from boundaries and positive relationships with staff. They reported that the behaviour of young people has improved, and that young people are more able to manage their anxieties and talk about their worries.

Young people appreciate the quality of the living space and the rural location of the home. They engage in a range of positive activities and develop significant hobbies and interests. They learn to love nature and benefit from the horse-riding facilities run by staff who have experience in equine therapy. This helps young people improve their emotional well-being and physical fitness.

Staff ensure that young people stay healthy through structured routines, physical exercise and a healthy diet. Staff understand the health needs of young people well and ensure that they get the support and treatment they need to stay healthy.

Wherever possible, staff support young people to stay in touch with their families. They help them come to terms with the reasons they are living away from home. Staff help young people develop a positive sense of self and promote an inclusive culture that celebrates difference and diversity.

Young people are given the opportunity to develop self-care skills and become more independent. They are also encouraged and allowed to be children. This helps each young person to develop at their own pace and build the confidence that they need in order to take on responsibilities according to their individual needs.

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

Behavioural support for young people in this home is outstanding. The provider operates a model of care informed by expert advice. This is based on an understanding of how past trauma and loss can impact on a child's emotional development and current functioning. This is used to develop a sophisticated understanding of individual needs. Staff reflect on their own experiences, values and feelings. This helps to inform them on how best to support young people to cope and manage their own feelings. Because of this, young people improve behaviour, make safer choices and consider the consequences of their actions on themselves and others.

Young people report feeling safe in the home and in the local community. One young person said, 'I am a different person since I came here. I used to be at risk but now I am safe.' He went on to describe how staff listen to him, care for him and how he feels 'at home'. All young people have a sense of belonging and engage well with staff to work through difficulties. They get on well with each other. They are able to resolve conflicts and learn from mistakes.

Staff understand the risks and vulnerabilities at play for each young person and the group as a whole. Detailed risk assessments identify proportionate responses to manage these risks. This means that young people are kept safe and become safer due to the care and support they receive.

Young people are only admitted to the home after a careful planning process that ensures that staff understand their needs. The provider carefully considers the impact and risks in relation to the children already living in the home before accepting new admissions.

When incidents occur, staff record these in detail and share, as necessary, with the placing authority. The manager carefully reviews all incidents and helps staff reflect on any learning points. Incidents have significantly reduced since the previous inspection for all young people living in the home. Staff are trained in behaviour management techniques and they employ these skilfully to prevent situations escalating.

The provider operates robust vetting procedures for staff recruitment. It provides comprehensive induction and support for new staff. The staff team is stable and provides a consistent experience of care for young people. This provides a safe, stable environment that is mutually supportive for both staff and young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager of the home is experienced. He is currently undertaking a level 5 leadership and management qualification, which is required for the role. He has recently stepped down from managing an additional home and now has more dedicated time to focus on this home.

The manager has improved the service in response to the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection. In particular, he has improved the way that new referrals are considered in relation to the potential impact on young people already living in the home. He has improved the recording of physical interventions and now ensures that young people who go missing are offered return home interviews.

The provider operates a therapeutic model of care that is now well understood by staff and is making a positive difference to the outcomes and experiences of young people. The service would improve further if this model of care is firmly embedded in all aspects of practice and recording. For example, the home's residential support plan, behaviour support plans and sanctions policy could be better linked to the home's detailed child and adolescent needs assessment tool. Staff supervisions and team sessions could better evidence the reflective practice that is consistent with their therapeutic approach.

The manager promotes an open, positive learning culture where staff feel safe to share their views. Staff speak highly of the support they receive from each other and, in particular, from leaders and managers in the service. They enjoy working in the home and are fully engaged with the child-focused ethos of the service. They receive regular formal supervision. However, this is not always recorded.

Placing social workers report a high level of professionalism from the staff and describe the service as 'well led'. The registered manager attends important professional meetings and advocates strongly to ensure that care plans focus on the best interests of young people.

The registered manager has effective systems in place to monitor the quality of care provided in the setting. He takes action to address any shortfalls and strives to raise standards. He has a good understanding of how young people experience care in the setting but he does not always evidence how their views inform service development.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC472164

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: Adam Law

Inspector

Lee Kirwin, social care inspector

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