

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 home is privately owned and provides care for up to five children. The home caters for children with learning disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 28 March 2023.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

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: 4 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
04/07/2022	Full	Good
29/06/2021	Full	Good
31/07/2019	Full	Good
16/05/2018	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are happy and settled in the home. They live in a well-maintained house that is welcoming and has a homely feel. There are photos of the children displayed throughout the home. The children's bedrooms are really well personalised with photos of them and their families, their choice of bedding, books and toys. A strong sense of belonging was conveyed for each child in the home.

Children share positive relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff are attentive and patient when caring for the children. They are nurturing in their approach and understand that children communicate through their behaviours. Staff encourage verbal communication, with communication aids being used at times. For example, emotion and choice boards are used to explore how children are feeling and to give them choices. Children's rights are respected, and they are shown that they are valued.

Social care professionals speak positively about the care provided by staff and the progress that children have made. For example, professionals reported that two children have developed their verbal communication skills. A child who was said to be non-verbal is now able to say several words. Another child is calmer and has been able to enjoy activities and trips in the community that were not previously possible. In addition, one child no longer requires the use of a harness when out publicly, one child now settles well at night and no longer requires medication, and another child has made progress with their personal care. Good-quality care from staff contributes to the progress that children make.

Staff are proactive and ensure that children are provided with enjoyable experiences. They support children to engage in a range of different activities, such as playing board games, reading books, or enjoying time out in the garden, where they have a range of apparatus for their enjoyment. Children also engage in group music therapy and enjoy trips out in the community. Staff have been proactive in displaying visual signs in local services to enhance children's experiences when accessing the services. Children are supported in gaining experience of navigating the world around them. They enjoy positive experiences daily.

In line with children's plans, staff support children to safely enjoy time with their families.

Children are cared for by a diverse team of staff who promote inclusion. Children get to experience food from different cultures when culture evenings take place. To prepare children for events such as this, social stories are used to aid their understanding.

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

Staff have a good understanding of each child's needs and risks. Detailed risk assessments identify each child's potential triggers and clearly guide staff on actions to take to support children. This ensures that children continue to receive individualised care.

Staff have completed training that has given them a greater understanding of children's vulnerabilities and how best to support them. This includes training on autism spectrum disorders, signing, epilepsy and models of care. This has contributed to children being cared for through a nurturing approach.

When a child who is non-verbal became unsettled, staff were patient in exploring what the child was communicating. They pulled together to support one another in caring for the child and were able to support the child to become calm. Staff know the children well, including the responses that are likely to prove successful when supporting them.

Children are praised by staff, which encourages further positive behaviour. When needed, staff also appropriately instil guidance and boundaries. On the rare occasion when a child left the home unsupervised, staff acted promptly and were able to support the child's safe return home. There was reflection on the incident, and measures were implemented to prevent future occurrences.

Pre-employment checks are carried out and help to minimise the risk of unsuitable applicants being employed to work in the home. Regular health and safety checks also help to ensure the safety of the children and others in the home.

Staff have completed safeguarding training. Safeguarding processes are an ongoing topic of discussion during team meetings and individually with staff during supervision sessions. When incidents have occurred, staff actions to manage risks have been appropriate in most instances. However, in one case, staff failed to follow procedure in response to a safeguarding incident. Specifically, there was a delay in some staff reporting their concerns. This prevented managers and external safeguarding partners from taking prompt action. There has been some learning from the incident. Managers have reinforced the importance of prompt reporting of concerns. They have also arranged refresher training for staff and have plans to further explore staff's support needs once external investigations have been concluded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is passionate about the children being supported to thrive. His belief is that the children should not be limited by their disabilities and that they should be supported to access opportunities available to them. There is a strong emphasis on empowering the children by actively seeking their wishes and views and acting on them. Consequently, children's participation is well encouraged.

At times, the manager works alongside staff to care for the children. This has provided the opportunity for the manager to model good-quality care to staff and to also establish a relationship with the children. This has allowed the manager to closely monitor the progress that children make and to have a better understanding of how to support staff to influence further progress.

Regular discussions take place about the children's support needs during staff meetings and supervision sessions. This demonstrates the commitment of managers to ensure that the children remain a priority. The managers also recognise the importance of children having consistency and ensure that staff are provided with a supportive environment. Consequently, staff morale is high. Staff expressed that they enjoy working in the home and that managers are supportive.

Managers are strong advocates for the children. When there have been concerns about children being without educational placements, concerns have been escalated with education professionals, the responsible local authorities and external services. The actions of managers have contributed to positive outcomes and school places being secured for two children. The children have settled well in school and continue to thrive.

Overall, staff are provided with a variety of good-quality training, with additional specialist training arranged by managers to ensure that children's individual needs are well met. It is also planned for staff to shortly commence reflective group sessions with a therapist. However, some refresher training for three staff members was overdue and the staff training log was not up to date.

Managers are aware of the home's strengths and areas for development. There is a strong focus on further developing communication with parents and external professionals and improving the language that staff use in recordings.

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, The 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— 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; 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)(v)(vi)(vii)(b))	25 October 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that records demonstrate that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and that the registered manager understands their key role in the training and development of staff in the home. Staff are to complete refresher training when due, and training records are to be kept updated. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11)

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: SC472164

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

Registered manager: Martin Honour

Inspector

Sasha Reid, Social Care Inspector

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