

SC472164

Registered provider: Amegreen Children's Services

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and run by a private organisation. It provides care for up to five children who primarily have learning disabilities. There were four children living in the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 28 March 2023.

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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	outstanding
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The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 19 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/09/2023	Full	Good
04/07/2022	Full	Good
29/06/2021	Full	Good
31/07/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children benefit from positive and warm relationships with staff who understand and skilfully support their individual communication needs. Staff provide responsive care that is sensitive to children's identity and life experiences. They have created an environment where children can explore and thrive. Children show through interactions with people that they feel safe, happy and settled.

Children have made exceptional progress from their starting points. All children attend full-time education, and staff are passionate about helping children achieve their best potential. Children of different ages have learned important new self-care skills. This means that they have an increased sense of autonomy and are equipped to take up a wider range of opportunities.

Children are helped to enjoy a fantastic range of activities. They have fun at theme parks, go to the zoo and join clubs related to their chosen hobbies where they spend time with their favourite people. Children and adults take part together in community events and challenges to raise money for charities. This gives children the opportunity to try new things and have a meaningful sense of being part of their community.

The home is spacious and welcoming and has the feel of a family home. Every room is decorated to a high standard and the garden has been designed around the children's sensory needs and interests. This means that children have lots of areas where they can play or have quiet time to relax. Managers have created an environment that meets children's needs, in a way that will support them in later life. For example, children have a light on their bedroom door they can switch on if they do not want to be disturbed. This gives children control over their own space and shows that their privacy is fully respected.

Staff and managers are dedicated to helping children enjoy positive and meaningful time with people who are important to them. As a result, children can spend more time at home, with two children now being able to stay overnight. Parents speak highly of the team and appreciate the high level of communication. One parent said that their child has been helped to be more independent and has lots of opportunities to go out.

Expert support has helped children to make incredible progress in their communication. Children who were not using words have started to communicate verbally. For example, one child is now able to tell staff what they want and if they are feeling unwell. Staff work innovatively to offer children additional communication aids to help them to access the world. For example, staff and children's voice recordings can be played alongside photos, which brings special memories to life. However, there is still work to do to ensure that each child always has their own specialised communication tool available to them during the day. The manager is aware of this and has plans for improvements in this area. The impact of this shortfall is limited due to excellent staff practice.

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

Managers and staff have a thorough understanding of the risks and challenges that children face. They use the home's therapeutic model of care to look at issues from the child's perspective and help them, using innovative and individualised approaches. Staff consistently promote positive behaviour and use relationships with the children to help them when they are upset or in distress. Children respond well to this. They are more settled and there have been a low number of incidents since the last inspection.

High-quality risk plans provide detailed information about children and guide staff to understand what their behaviour is communicating. This means that children's disabilities are well understood, and staff know what action to take when children need support. Staff take time to find out about the children's experience and they are proactively helped to stay safe and learn simple strategies to manage difficult emotions. As a result, children are less withdrawn, behaviours of distress have decreased, and children are better able to regulate their emotions.

If children run away from staff, they respond quickly and keep them safe. Plans are put in place to help children to feel secure and reduce impulsive behaviours when they are out. Consequently, children can enjoy time in the community without additional restriction and there have been no episodes of children going missing from care.

Occasionally, staff guide or hold children to help them during times of distress. These measures are always used as a last resort, and in the least restrictive way. Staff skilfully use positive behaviour support techniques to help children to calm. Comprehensive records of any holds are completed, and the manager carries out a review to assess if the action taken was effective and in the best interests of the child. Managers ensure that children are supported afterwards to understand what happened.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Managers are fully invested in making sure that the home provides excellent care and experiences for children. They understand the challenges faced by disabled children and how their life experiences have shaped children's interactions with the world. Managers have high aspirations for all the children and inspire the same culture in the staff team.

There is a stable and effective management structure in place. Managers and staff know children very well and speak about them with love and pride. There are regular meetings that focus on understanding children's experiences, behaviours, feelings and needs. This means that time is taken to analyse and reflect on the support being provided and how this could be changed to further help each child. For example, staff think about how children's sensory needs can be met based on new or changing behaviours.

Managers and staff work continuously with other professionals to ensure that children have the specialised care that they need. When there are gaps in services, the

organisation commissions its own practitioners and resources to offer children the support that they need. For example, a therapist provides children with weekly support.

Staff are well supported and are actively encouraged to develop and progress in their personal development and career. Managers recognise individual potential and encourage staff to expand their skills and experience. Staff say that they have had the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. New staff are well supported to learn their role, and the whole team help them to get to know the children and how best to support them.

There is a comprehensive training programme for staff which underpins their high-quality practice. Managers are proactive in identifying training for staff in response to emerging needs of children. This ensures that the children are consistently cared for by experienced and well-informed staff.

Children's progress is monitored effectively through regular reviews of plans and targets. Social workers are positive about the progress that children make and the approach that staff use to support them. The use of child-centred language in all plans and records means that staff think carefully about what they write and make sure that children's views are captured.

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care on a day-to-day basis. This includes the use of and support to use communication aids, equipment and/or any necessary language support individualised to each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)

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

Registered provider address: The Corner House, 18–20 West End Road, Mortimer, Berkshire RG7 3TF

Responsible individual: Rachel Redgwell

Registered manager: Martin Honour

Inspector

Shirin White, Social Care Inspector

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