

SC472164

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 five children. The home provides care to children on a medium- to long-term basis to give them the opportunity to come to terms with previous experiences of trauma, abuse, loss, rejection and poor attachments.

The manager has been in post since 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 9 February 2021 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 June 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 31 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/07/2019	Full	Good
16/05/2018	Full	Good
17/11/2016	Full	Good
25/04/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make remarkable progress in all areas of their life from the point they move into the home. Clear structure and boundaries and a therapeutic approach aid this progression. Children enjoy reading before school. This helps improve their literacy. Staff understand phonics and celebrate children's educational successes. Good communication systems exist between the children's home and each child's school. Children are well presented when they attend school, which builds their self-esteem and identity within their learning environments.

Positive and loving relationships are formed between children and staff. Staff offer children appropriate affection and care. Children benefit from home-cooked and nutritious meals. Staff read bedtime stories to children and tuck them in at bedtime. Children benefit from this caring and nurturing approach.

Individual care plans and long-term goals are understood by staff and achieved. Children move on successfully from the home. Most recently, two children have moved on to live with long-term foster carers. Feedback from their placing authorities was exceptional with regards to the home's input into the positive outcomes for these children.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, children have made the most of their environment and activities in the local area. This includes some children attending after-school clubs and holiday clubs. This provides opportunities for children to make new friends and have new experiences. The garden offers a wealth of fun with dens, swings, climbing frame and a slide. Staff have high aspirations for children. They motivate children and encourage them to value themselves and respect others.

Children have good access to health services. Improvements in eyesight and dental care are notable as a result of children attending their appointments. Specialist health services are sought when required such as the child and adolescent mental health services. Managers commission their own clinicians to support the emotional well-being of children.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children feel safe and secure. They have trusted staff whom they can seek support from and talk to about any worries. This includes the manager, who is available to support children at weekends and in the evenings.

A positive safeguarding culture is instilled in the home. Staff identify concerns and make the appropriate referrals to statutory agencies. However, managers do not always follow up to ensure that an outcome is recorded for all safeguarding referrals. Due to the lack of an outcome, staff are therefore not fully aware of

important information. Furthermore, children who raise their concerns do not receive a relevant conclusion.

Risk is generally well understood by staff. Action is taken to minimise risk and to liaise with other agencies to make well-informed decisions. Children are safer because of this effective multi-agency working.

Children are not supported to learn how to use the internet safely, taking into account their age and understanding. Instead, children's online activity is supervised constantly. This approach means that children are not supported to understand how to use the internet safely on their own as part of a risk-based approach and as they move towards independence.

Staff encourage children to behave positively, and children respond well. Children receive daily praise for their achievements. Sanctions are not used. Children regularly receive treats if they have done something particularly well, for example trips to the cinema, breakfast in a café, or to buy a milkshake.

Since the previous inspection in July 2019, the frequency of restraint was at a high level until March 2021. Many of the restraints that occurred were in children's bedrooms, with some on children's beds. Monitoring by the manager failed to consider the impact of such force being used in a child's bedroom. Despite this, progress has occurred in the past three months and no restraints have taken place. Staff describe the home as much more settled.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Managers are present in the home and develop positive, trusting relationships with children. Children spend frequent quality time with managers, and this makes children feel valued.

Managers role model the positive and respectful ethos of the home. When children disagree with decisions about their future, managers support them. The registered manager puts children first and wants the best for them. The child's voice is promoted using advocates and through supporting children to make complaints.

Staff receive regular, child-focused supervision. Most of the staff have completed the diploma in residential childcare. Not all staff have completed online safety training, and some lack an understanding about the specific vulnerabilities of children in their care. This gap in some staff members' skills means they do not have the relevant knowledge to safeguard children.

Managers always consider the potential risks a new child may pose if they were to move into the home. However, the positive impact of a new child is not considered or recorded when matching children. As a result, impact assessments only focus on possible negatives.

Monitoring systems are not effective. While the responsible individual identifies some areas for development, not all weaknesses are identified. Managers did not recognise or act on some environmental improvements required in the home. The quality of care review fails to consult with children and other important people, and the submission of this review to Ofsted was not timely. One allegation was not reported to Ofsted as required.

Recording systems are not effective and this impedes the ability to monitor the quality of care. While managers identify some of these shortfalls, plans to improve are in their infancy. For example, monitoring of restraints does not recognise the impact of the restraint. Children's and staff debriefs are not always insightful.

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— help each child to understand how to keep safe. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(ii)) In particular, ensure that staff support children, in a way that is appropriate for their age, about online safety and fully understand their vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation.	12 August 2021
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. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(v)) In particular, ensure that leaders and managers record outcomes to safeguarding referrals they have made.	12 August 2021
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 promotes their welfare.	12 August 2021

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)(a)(b)(2)(c)) In particular, ensure that staff have suitable training and skills with regards contextualised safeguarding, online safety and exploitation.	
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 promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b)(2)(f)(h)) In particular, ensure that monitoring and review systems are effective.	12 August 2021
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	12 August 2021
In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating— the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it. The registered person must—	12 August 2021

supply to HMCI a copy of the quality of care review report within 28 days of the date on which the quality of care review is completed.

The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff.
(Regulation 45 (2)(b)(4)(a)(5))

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the environment is a homely and domestic environment, ensuring that any environmental improvements required are acted on swiftly. Homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that when they consider the impact a new child may have on the existing group of children, they consider the positive impact as well as potential risks. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.4)

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: 2 Granary Court, Fair Oak Green, Stratfield Saye, Reading RG7 2DL

Responsible individual: Gary Carlin

Registered manager: Mary Henry

Inspectors

Nicola Lownds, Social Care Compliance Inspector
Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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