

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	12/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC474179
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Acorn Children's Home (Branston) Ltd
Registered provider address	155 Normanton Road, Derby, DE23 6UR

Responsible individual	Rachel Dyché
Registered manager	Zara Doorbar
Inspector	Louise Whittle

Inspection date	12/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has sustained effectiveness.	
The home remains comfortable and welcoming and young people enjoy excellent trusting relationships with staff who are child focused and caring. Young people have fun with enthusiastic staff who support them to engage in a range of activities including swimming, going to the gym, singing, ice-skating and going to the cinema. These support their social, educational, physical and emotional development. One young person was delighted to receive two pet gerbils for his birthday and he has worked with the staff to understand how to care for them. He cleans them out regularly and is caring for them well and safely. Young people make significant progress in their independence skills, family contact, personal hygiene and education. One young person, who is waiting to start in full time education, receives daily support from creative staff to learn from trips out to the library and online maths and English.	
Young people say that staff listen to them and help them when they have concerns. Young people enthusiastically engage in the regular young people's meetings to express their views, wishes and feelings and they take it in turns to write the minutes. Parents and childcare professionals say that young people are thriving and well cared for. The parent of one young person said, 'her care is absolutely fantastic, they meet all of her needs, she's doing well at school because of the environment she's in and she has finally settled and can focus on school. The staff are lovely.' The social worker for another one young person commented that, 'communication is excellent and timely, the placement meets his needs fully he has outstanding care, he is thriving here'.	
Young people feel safe and say that staff help them to understand how to keep themselves safe. The youngest in placement is aged nine years and he confirms that staff teach him to cross the road safely. Since the past inspection there have been no incidents requiring physical intervention. The skilful staff are trained in de-escalation and understanding the behaviour and triggers for each young person. The calm, friendly atmosphere with in the home supports young people to feel relaxed and manage their own emotions and behaviour. Staff have not assessed any of the young people as being at risk of child sexual exploitation, but they are highly trained to be vigilant and to address the issue.	

The child- focused and very committed registered manager has an excellent knowledge and understanding of each young person's personal history and care needs. She works to drive up standards and makes effective use of team meetings and supervision to develop staff skills and practice. The registered manager has ensured that staff supervision and training are up to date and that training is targeted to meet the needs of each of the young people. She has booked further training on autism. The registered manager has undertaken a full review of the induction process for new staff, to place a stronger focus on their understanding of their role.

The registered manager and staff advocate on behalf of young people and recently successfully challenged the placing authority for one young person to provide him with a laptop for his college work. The registered manager further challenged the placing authority to allow him to remain in placement until he has completed all of his exams, which will be after his 18th birthday. This would allow him time to focus on identifying new accommodation and make a positive move to independence.

Staff are very positive about the registered manager and feel that the team is working really well to help young people make progress. They feel strongly supported by the registered manager. The registered manager recently took the decision to dismiss a staff member who was not developing professionally and had behaved unprofessionally. This indicates progress in her professional development, as a relatively new manager, in understanding the management and leadership role.

Staff work very effectively with a range of other professionals, including education to support young people's learning. They work closely with health, their in-house therapists and Camhs to help them effectively support young people's emotional well-being and mental health. Staff work with parents, social workers and independent advocates to help young people achieve positive change in family relationships, gain services, and promote independence and confidence. Liaison with the police ensures that staff effectively support young people through difficult experiences such as court attendances. Social worker and parents praise the registered manager and staff's excellent communication.

The registered manager has responded positively to the requirements and recommendations from the last inspection, resulting in an improved induction package designed to support new staff to understand their roles and responsibilities. Close monitoring and supervision have ensured that staff follow young people plans consistently.

Information about this children's home

This section should outline:

This privately owned children's home is registered to provide care for up to four young people aged between eight and 17 years.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/12/2015	Full	Good
29/01/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/08/2014	Full	Adequate

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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