

SC416915

Registered provider: Acorn Homes UK

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by a private company which has other homes in the area. It is registered to accommodate up to seven children who display challenging behaviour and experience difficulties in forming and sustaining relationships. The company also has a school which children may attend.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2014.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 December 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of last inspection: 29 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/08/2018	Full	Good
20/06/2017	Full	Good
22/02/2017	Full	Good
06/10/2016	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
<p>The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust; an understanding about acceptable behaviour. (Regulation 11 (1)(a)(b))</p> <p>In particular, to take decisive action in cases of discriminatory behaviour, to ensure that children gain a clear understanding of the impact and seriousness of this.</p>	31/03/2020
<p>The leadership and management standard requires the registered person to demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(g)(i)(h))</p> <p>In particular, to develop the home’s analysis of strengths and weaknesses in careractice. Use this to enhance service provision and ensure continuous improvement at the home.</p>	31/03/2020
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees— have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33 (4)(c))</p>	31/03/2020

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20). The plan should:

- detail the necessary management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff, to enable the delivery of the home's Statement of Purpose;
- detail the processes and agreed timescales for staff to achieve induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety and mandatory qualifications);
- detail the process for managing and improving poor performance;
- detail the process and timescales for supervision of practice (see regulation 33 (4)(b)) and keep appropriate records for staff in the home.

The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff – including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from a dedicated and committed team of staff who place children at the heart of everything they do. Children have clear placement plans that contain ambitious goals. Staff regularly review placement plans to track progress. They compile weekly reports that provide clear feedback on activities and progress for children.

Professionals from placing authorities reported that children are making great progress. One social worker said that her child was 'transformed' by the service. She said that everyone who knows the child comments on the huge changes in their positive self-identity, ability to maintain good quality relationships and their capacity to manage their emotions.

Staff morale is good and staff retention is high. This helps to provide a consistent experience of care for children. Children develop close bonds with staff. One child said it was like an extension of his family. Children spoke very positively about the staff team and with great affection.

Staff demonstrate pride in the achievements of children. They display very high levels of care and empathy. Children in education are encouraged to participate actively and staff support them in every way possible to achieve success. When children have not been able to immediately access education provision, the team has advocated well to get alternative or intermediary provision in place. In one case, the manager was able to find tutorial support for a child and put it in place straight away, rather than wait for the

lengthy procedure of applying through the placing authority.

Children are confident to speak to staff about their views and wishes. They described frequent opportunities for participation in choices about their daily lives.

Children benefit from a homely and welcoming environment. They feel valued as a result and take great pride in their home. They get access to a wide range of positive activities and are encouraged to get involved in community-based clubs such as karate, football and cadets. Staff identify the importance of children being given time and space to relax at home, too.

One child was recently involved in an emergency move from a sister home. This was handled very well, considering tight time constraints. The child was positive about the move and said he felt welcome in the home. He appeared relaxed and at ease. The child's social worker said the move was managed very professionally, and early indications are positive for his future at the home.

Staff work hard to help children spend time with their families and to keep in touch, even when the distances travelled are significant.

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

Staff prioritise the safety of children. They can identify risks to children with good effect. Staff complete clear risk assessments and regularly update them to take into account any changes in children's circumstances. Children and young people have an active role in the creation and review of their own risk assessments. Behaviour management strategies are in place for all children and young people and staff follow these consistently, reviewing plans as needed. As a result, children feel very safe. Staff ensure that challenging incidents are infrequent and managed well.

Staff are confident when dealing with children and young people who are absent from the home without permission. They follow clear procedures and work with external agencies to ensure that children and young people return to the home as quickly as possible. Staff genuinely care for children and make sure that children and young people have a positive experience when they return. Children and young people receive return to home interviews after every missing episode. This helps staff understand the reasons why children and young people go missing and the risks they may be facing when missing.

Staff support children and young people to understand how to stay safe online and there are effective strategies to support this. Children and young people use the internet in communal areas or a place where they can be easily checked. Children and young people develop trusting relationships with staff. They can take any concerns to staff confidently, knowing they will be listened to and supported.

Staff work in close partnership with external agencies to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are

clear on how to manage safeguarding issues. They always focus on the safety of children and young people.

The organisation has a strong staff recruitment process in place which ensures that staff are carefully vetted prior to beginning work with the children and young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager demonstrates a caring and compassionate nature. She is very proud of the children, the staff and the home. Her ethos is clear about the way in which she wants the home to run. She places the children at the centre of her practice. In doing so, she has created a space that successfully replicates a family environment. She is clear that the child comes first and expects all staff to embed this in everything that they do.

Staff described the registered manager as 'hands on'. She is an excellent role model for staff and children. She has high expectations for children and nurtures their self-belief and self-worth to enable them to achieve their goals.

The registered manager shows a deep understanding of the needs of the children in her care. She talks passionately about what she wants to achieve for them. They, in turn, respect her and value her leadership.

Staff feel well supported. They described an 'open door' approach to management and supervision. Supervision records are of good quality and meet the frequency laid out in the home's supervision policy. Staff are not receiving annual appraisals. However, the registered manager said that there is to be a review of the appraisal process to re-energise it and to ensure that staff get the best from their annual meetings.

Staff benefit from good-quality training systems and they value the training and support they receive. This helps them to be confident and knowledgeable in their work and enables them to deliver effective interventions to help children make progress.

The registered manager uses internal and external monitoring systems. However, there is currently a lack of analysis of these systems. This means that managers and staff do not routinely reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the home. There is no current workforce development plan.

Managers completed an investigation into an incident involving a child. During this, the child used racist language towards a member of staff. There was no evidence that this had been addressed with the necessary rigour that it deserved.

Social workers described the manager as a strong advocate for children. They trust and respect her. Social workers often come back to the placement to try to get other children they have under their care into the service. One social worker said she wished that all homes were like this one.

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: SC416915

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Homes UK

Registered provider address: Spurling Cannon Ltd, 424 Margate Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6SJ

Responsible individual: Carol Bradley

Registered manager: Tania Smith

Inspectors

Peter Jackson, social care inspector

Vevene Muhammad, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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