

SC390751

Registered provider: Acorn Care (UK) Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately operated children's home offers care and accommodation for up to five children or young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The registered manager has extensive experience of managing children's homes and she has been registered since 2014.

Inspection dates: 9 to 10 January 2020

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: 19 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2019	Full	Good
22/01/2018	Full	Good
14/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
14/06/2016	Full	Good

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
<p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children's home's overall aims and outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; and</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets the children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff—</p> <p>provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b)(2)(b)(iv))</p>	29/02/2020
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that—</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>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 care provided in the home; and</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(b)(2)(f)(h))</p>	29/02/2020

Recommendations

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, and due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.10)

In particular, staff should ensure that children's plans are written in a format that is appropriate to the age and understanding of each child.

- The registered person should ensure that any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. In some cases, it will be important for children to make reparation in some form to anyone hurt by their behaviour and the staff in the home should be skilled to support the child to understand this and carry it out. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people have positive experiences that contribute towards their good progress and development. The staff team is accomplished at forming meaningful relationships with the children and young people that give the children and young people stability and consistency. The children and young people commented that they 'can talk to all the staff', and that they 'trust all of them'.

The children and young people feel that they are consulted and that there is always someone they can talk to. Planned key-worker sessions offer each child and young person private one-to-one time when they can talk to staff about any worries that they may have. Mealtimes, when all the staff and children sit together, are another way the children, young people and the staff talk to each other on a more informal basis. This creates a happy family atmosphere.

All the children and young people have 100% school attendance. The staff work closely with educational colleagues and other professionals to ensure that the children and young people are thriving academically. The children and young people's health needs are met, including their mental and emotional needs. Interventions include the provider funding psychological services, which provides an additional layer of professional support.

The registered manager takes great care when considering admitting any new child or young person. She carries out a full impact risk assessment and asks the children and young people about their views and how they feel about sharing their home. This careful

planning involving the children and young people has meant that new children and young people are welcomed and that they quickly settle into their new home.

The storage and contents of the children and young people's personal information is not well managed. Consequently, it is difficult to locate important information about each child and young person's relevant care plans and day-to-day arrangements. Some written residential plans contain contradictory information, which increases the risk of the staff being unsure about the children and young people's current needs and how they should be met.

There is no obvious indication that the mismanagement of the children and young people's records has had a negative effect on the children and young people's progress and development. However, continued poor record keeping could potentially adversely affect a child or young person's ongoing progress and development.

Additionally, the children and young people's residential plans are not written in a way that corresponds with the children and young people's age or their levels of understanding. Consequently, the children and young people are not able to read, contribute to, or fully understand their individual plans.

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

The staff are organised during their working hours and plan how they will observe and supervise the children and young people. This helps to protect the children and young people, particularly the younger children. The staff teach the children and young people about potential risks, such as e-safety and exploitation, and what the children and young people should do if they feel vulnerable or afraid. This proactive way of working prepares the children and young people to develop their understanding of keeping safe and resilience.

Overall, the staff manage behaviour positively, favouring incentives, rewards and praise for good behaviour. This is improving the children and young people's social interactions and confidence. However, there have been occasions when sanctions have been used punitively. For example, one child has had their mobile telephone removed several times for misbehaving, but this measure is not one of the home's permissible sanctions. Using non-permissible sanctions potentially compromises the children and young people's rights.

The children and young people live in a home that meets their needs. The staff take great care to provide a warm, homely environment that gives the children and young people a secure living space. Any potential risks in the home and the local community are recorded and monitored. The staff work closely with local police, the children's vulnerability team and other safeguarding agencies to gather information and share local safeguarding intelligence. These measures mean that the children and young people are better protected.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has high aspirations for the children and young people, an ethos that is shared by the staff team and the provider. Leaders, managers and the staff actively advocate on behalf of the children and young people, which promotes the children and young people's rights, equality and diversity. All the staff work effectively with external professionals and agencies to provide the children and young people with access to the services and support they need.

The staff team receives the training it requires to meet the children and young people's needs. The staff have regular formal and informal supervision, and regular team meetings. All the staff consulted said that they feel supported and that the registered manager is approachable. The staff also reported that morale is 'very good'. This open, supportive management style values the staff and presents the children and young people with a stable, happy home.

The children and young people are consulted about their day-to-day living arrangements, how they wish to spend their free time, and their feelings. However, it is not clear how the registered manager acts on the children and young people's feedback, or how the children and young people's wishes and suggestions have an impact on the registered manager's review of the quality of care. This oversight in the monitoring process potentially excludes the children and young people's views from being acted on.

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: SC390751

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Acorn Care (UK) Limited

Registered provider address: 33 Kellaw Road, Yarm Road Business Park, Darlington, County Durham DL1 4YA

Responsible individual: Julie-Ann Foxton

Registered manager: Jayne Bogan

Inspector

Debbie White: social care inspector

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