

2647163

Registered provider: Ascent Fostering Agency

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately owned home provides care for up to five children between the ages of 11 and 15 years with social and emotional difficulties.

The home's statement of purpose states that they offer a therapeutic approach that supports boys who require residential care, to enable them to 'step down' to foster care or return to their birth families.

The home and the manager registered with Ofsted in December 2021.

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 August 2023

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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: 1 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/11/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress in this home. Staff have a good understanding of children's experiences and needs, so that they are able to support them. The therapeutic model of care is working well. As a result, some children have been able to return home to their families.

Children are given opportunities to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The home allows children to become 'champions' in safeguarding, health and safety, and the recruitment of new staff. The child recruitment champion devises interview questions and sits on the recruitment panel. These initiatives help children to feel valued and provides them with opportunities to develop new skills.

Children's participation in the day-to-day running of the home is a real strength. The ethos of the home is to create a 'culture of joint ownership.' This is achieved through the therapeutic parenting model, which is embedded within staff practice. It is also supported with the input of the home's clinical child psychologist.

Children build trusting relationships with staff and with each other. There is an authentic family feel in the home. Children like to spend time together and say that they like to 'hang out' downstairs with each other and with staff to play games. Children also enjoy activities such as trips to theme park, shops, sports activities, attending youth clubs and holidays. Children said that staff are open, they listen, and they care.

Children are supported to learn and develop independence skills, such as being able to do their own laundry, cooking, and completing curriculum vitae. One child's social worker commented that the child 'has been really proud of all the progress he has made with his independence skills.' One child's parent stated that they have seen a significant improvement in their child's behaviour, confidence and understanding of boundaries since moving into the home.

Children lead busy and fulfilling lives. They all attend school or engage with home tutoring while awaiting a school place. The staff education lead has supported children to make significant progress. One child returned to full-time education after not being in school for over two years.

The home has a warm and welcoming environment. It is furnished and decorated to a high standard that maintains a homely feel. There are large communal spaces inside and out, and children's bedrooms that are personalised by them. However, some window restrictors in the children's bedrooms, and one door handle, need replacing.

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

Children say that they feel safe living in the home. One child said that it feels 'natural' living here.

Children's individual preferences, wishes, feelings, risks and needs are thoroughly known and understood by the staff team. Children's behaviour support plans are comprehensive and consistently include views of children. Staff ensure that records of any developing risks, and strategies to reduce those risks, are kept up to date. Key-work sessions with children are of a good quality and address their risks and behavioural concerns sensitively.

Managers take allegations and safeguarding matters seriously. They follow the home's allegation and safeguarding procedures, and their responses to any concerns are swift and robust.

Staff help children understand the boundaries in the home. When boundaries are challenged, staff use restorative consequences. This helps children to address negative behaviour in a more positive way.

Physical intervention is rare. Staff are trained in de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques that are effective. As a result, physical intervention is not usually required.

Children know how to make a complaint. Complaints made by children are acted on swiftly by the manager, and any actions taken are shared with the child.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager's oversight and monitoring of the home is exceptional. The registered manager has implemented service trackers to monitor children's progress and achievements.

Staff feel valued and supported by leaders and managers. One staff member said that the registered manager 'goes the extra mile to make sure that everything goes right.'

The registered manager is a strong advocate for children, who effectively challenges local authority providers, when necessary, to ensure that children's voices are heard. As a result, there has been a greater understanding of children's needs, and appropriate action has been taken to meet them.

Leaders and managers value their staff team and invest in development opportunities to support their career progression. One member of staff said, '[Name of the home] has supported me in reaching my goals with staff training and staff development and encouraged me to apply for higher roles within the organisation.' Consequently, there is low staff turnover and children receive consistent care.

The registered manager provides a robust staff induction and probation process alongside specialist training. This means that staff are skilled and able to provide high-quality care to children. Staff and managers receive regular and effective supervision. They also have access to weekly reflective clinical supervision with the home's psychotherapist.

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

- The registered person should ensure that they regularly maintain the home environment to ensure that it is safe for children and repair the window restrictors and door handle. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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: 2647163

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Ascent Fostering Agency

Registered provider address: Ascent Fostering Agency, Suite 5, 1st floor Hillcrest House, 51 Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey SM6 0LT

Responsible individual: Mark Pomell

Registered manager: Michelle Pryce-Morally

Inspector

Amanda Burrows, Social Care Inspector

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