

2649904

Registered provider: Arc-HD Services Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care for up to three children between the ages of 9 and 18 years who may have attachment difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural issues and/or mental health difficulties.

Three children were living at the home at the time of the inspection.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 28 March 2023

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 July 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 May 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/05/2023	Full	Good
18/10/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff provide good care and support to children. The staff nurture the children and understand their vulnerabilities. The children thrive in the care of the staff, who they feel want only the best for them. One child said, 'The staff here give you time, individual time. They do not tell you what to do or anything like that; just give the time to let it out.'

Children live in a safe and welcoming home. Inspirational messages adorn the walls to encourage positive self-image and thinking. Each child has their own personalised bedroom decorated with posters of their favourite singers and cartoon characters. The children have their own bathrooms with specialised sinks. The children enjoy that they have house pets. The children's photos are proudly displayed, and the atmosphere feels like a family home.

The staff develop trusting relationships with the children. The children have affectionate nicknames for the staff that they have written on a blackboard, reflecting the close relationships between them. The staff encourage the children to express their views, wishes and feelings, and they ensure that there are plenty of opportunities to do so. Children feel that they can speak to staff about any concerns that they have and that they will be listened to.

Education professionals report that children speak positively about the care they receive. The children often refer to the other children they live with as 'step sisters' and the home as 'my home', indicating a strong sense of belonging and solid family experience. Good-quality communication between the staff and the school helps school staff understand and anticipate likely behaviours during the school day. The staff support has helped one child, who previously refused to go to school, access education. Their introduction to the school was completed gradually, and they now attend school full time.

The staff encourage children's relationships with their families and support the children to spend time with them. Staff support has enabled one child to get back in contact with their parent. Staff continue to support them to build their relationship.

The children make good progress because of the help and support of the staff. Staff talk fondly and positively about the children. They are proud of the progress each child is making. Staff develop strong, enduring relationships with children and continue to appropriately stay in touch when children leave. One social worker described the staff as 'wonderful' and the manager as 'excellent'.

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

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. When concerns arise, they take appropriate action to ensure children get the support they need to stay safe.

The staff support children in understanding their emotions and behaviours. They guide them to reflect on situations and explore strategies for managing them. Staff seek advice from external professionals on how to manage tricky situations when necessary. Staff use guidance and ideas from partner professionals to inform their practice.

The staff are skilled in recognising when children need support. They respond to incidents quickly and effectively. Following any incidents of self-harm, staff sensitively and creatively explore children's thoughts and feelings. They reflect on these incidents with the children in a positive way. This helps the children learn and find other ways to express their emotions. This supportive reflection helps the children to be increasingly safe. As a result of the staff's support, one child's self-harming behaviour has reduced significantly.

The manager ensures that measures to ensure children's safety, including online, are effective. Staff thoroughly assess risk and understand children's particular vulnerabilities. Children's individual risk management plans are regularly updated. Staff are not afraid of supporting children to take age- and developmentally appropriate risks. They understand that well-managed risk is an essential part of children's development. Staff carefully balance the need to keep children safe by allowing children the freedom and responsibility appropriate for their age, for example managing independent travel and time with friends. Staff help the children gradually learn the skills to manage how to use a phone safely by initially giving them a mobile phone without internet connectivity.

One social worker spoke very highly of the care their child received and how staff managed to keep the child safe and happy, despite complex mental health needs. This social worker described the home as 'one of the best places for children to live'.

There are systems in place for safer staff recruitment. However, one agency staff recruitment record does not contain all of the required information, such as evidence of proof of identity, including a recent photograph and ensuring an original Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate is viewed and clearly recorded.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an effective registered manager who knows the staff well. Her influence is present in the home, and she leads by example to support and develop the team.

The manager is actively involved in the children's day-to-day care and is identified by the children as a trusted adult. She knows the children and the progress they make. The manager and the staff have high aspirations for each child and help them enjoy their childhoods.

The staff feel well supported by senior leaders, who provide regular supervision focused on their welfare and development. This creates a strong sense of teamwork. Staff commitment to providing consistent support to the children and helping them learn the skills they need to progress positively through life's challenges is evident. One staff member said, 'I feel extremely proud to be part of the team.'

Senior leaders are reflective and seek to understand the reasons why children move on in an unplanned way. They use this learning to implement positive changes to enhance the quality of care for children.

Newly recruited staff receive a comprehensive induction, which includes shadowing experienced staff. Staff can access relevant training to support them in caring for the children. However, there is no process in place for recording and monitoring the training that staff, including agency staff, undertake. This undermines the manager's overview of staff training and whether training is completed and kept up to date.

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

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'.

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they have a clear process in place for the recording and monitoring of the training that all staff, including agency staff, undertake. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 53, and paragraph 10.8)
- The registered person should maintain good employment practice. They should ensure that recruitment of all staff, including agency staff, safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, and paragraph 13.1)

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: 2649904

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Arc-HD Services Ltd

Registered provider address: Wessex House, Upper Market Street, Eastleigh SO50 9FD

Responsible individual: Katherine Openshaw

Registered manager: Lauren Walker-Smart

Inspectors

Sharron Dormand, Social Care Inspector
Mark Dawkins, 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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