

2647163

Registered provider: Ascent Fostering Agency Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home registered with Ofsted in December 2021 and is privately owned. It provides care for up to five children with social and emotional difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, four children were living in the home.

The post for a registered manager has been vacant since January 2025. The current manager has applied to register with Ofsted.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 11 July 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/07/2024	Full	Outstanding
08/08/2023	Full	Outstanding
01/11/2022	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Staff support children to develop trusted relationships in the home. Their strong therapeutic ethos and approach help children to feel secure and settled. As a result, they develop good relationships with each other. The home has a welcoming and family-like environment, which is enhanced by the fact that there is no staff office. Everyone, including senior leaders, participates in the home's monthly community meetings, which means that the children know everyone who is involved in running the home. One child said, 'You forget you're in a placement.'

Leaders are child focused when arranging children's admissions and departures. They ensure that they have a deep understanding of children's needs and are fully involved in plans for children to move into the home. One independent reviewing officer said that they were very impressed by their proactive approach in developing a child-centred, individualised transition plan and how they supported the child's comfort and stability in their new environment. When children leave, staff prepare a comprehensive end of placement report, which provides important information to support their move to a new home.

Children make excellent progress in their education. Staff advocate for them to have an education provision and for timely reviews of pupil education plans and education, health, and care plans. If children are not in full-time education, staff support them to maintain a healthy structure to their daily routines. Staff are proactive in addressing any emerging concerns, such as a decrease in attendance or punctuality.

Children's voices are heard. They feel that the staff genuinely want to know their wishes and feelings and make meaningful efforts to ensure that this happens. For example, one child said that staff ensure that everyone takes part in the home's monthly community meetings. Another child expressed their appreciation for staff taking a flexible approach to their family time, which enabled the child to spend more time at their parent's home. They added that they have had the 'best support' living in this home.

Children live in a beautiful, modern, well-decorated and well-furnished environment. The home is bright, clean, spacious, and maintained to a high standard throughout. Children have comfortable bedrooms that are tidy and personalised to their taste. There is a large back patio and garden, which is surrounded by trees that provide privacy. Barbecues are held here, and there is a boxing bag and basketball hoop for the children to use.

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

Children's risks are very well understood and safely managed. Well-written risk assessments reflect a thorough comprehensive understanding of children's needs and provide detailed strategies for staff to manage risks. There is an effective system in place to ensure that all staff are up to date with children's current risks. As a result, staff have

good insight into how risks are triggered and how to safeguard children. One social worker said, 'If there's any safeguarding concerns, they alert me, ask my advice; they have always taken measures to address things, such as key-work sessions. It's not lip service; they actually do it.'

Incidents are managed exceptionally well. Staff are trauma informed and competent in using the home's therapeutic approach to de-escalate situations. As a result, there have not been any police call-outs or physical restraints since the last inspection. Incident reports provide clear accounts of the circumstances leading up to an incident, the details of what happened and the next steps. Children and staff are routinely debriefed by managers. On one occasion, a manager called the home at 7am to ensure that night staff were provided with a debrief before they finished their shift. Reports contain thoughtful manager oversight, in which the potential reasons underlying children's behaviours are considered and clear follow-up actions are set out. This approach leads children to feel safely contained.

Staff follow the missing-from-home procedures well. They report appropriately to the police and local authority and make concerted attempts to maintain contact with children. Children are welcomed home when they return. Staff always have conversations with children to establish the details of where they have been and any incidents that may have impacted their well-being while they were away from the home. However, staff have not routinely requested independent return home interviews from children's placing authorities.

Children's key-work sessions are highly individualised. They are based on what is currently happening in children's lives and are relevant for their ages and stages of development. Children's voices are heard and captured well in key-work reports. Staff provide children with helpful practical advice and encouragement alongside clear boundaries and empathic emotional support.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership of the home is excellent. The responsible individual is actively involved in the running of the home and provides effective support for the manager and deputy management team. The previous registered manager stepped down from her role in January, and leaders made careful arrangements for the incoming manager to transition into the role. This minimised the impact of the change for children and staff. The new manager has a very good knowledge and understanding of the children's needs and personalities.

Leaders have very robust oversight of all aspects of children's lives. This is underpinned by the home's 'team around the child' model, which involves children having dedicated staff members who attend all their meetings and keep them under regular review. Staff maintain detailed recordings on a service tracker, which charts children's progress against the quality standards and provides an overarching view of their journeys in the

home. This means that the whole team knows the children very well and can identify progress made and where additional support is needed.

The home's therapeutic values and frameworks are fully embedded in practice. The senior therapeutic consultant developed bespoke training, which includes trauma-informed parenting, attachment strategies and therapeutic parenting, as well as an emotional well-being guide for children. Staff have a sound knowledge of the therapeutic approach, and this is evidenced in all aspects of their work. One social worker said, 'They are very trauma informed, child focused, and person centred led; [name of child] has a very nurturing experience.'

Staff enjoy working in the home. They take pride in being part of a team that provides such nurturing care for children and celebrates all their achievements. They feel well supported in their roles and appreciate that leaders are ambitious about staff's professional development. For example, the deputy managers are on the recently developed internal 'trainee deputy management pathway,' and other staff members have individual areas of responsibility, such as leading on children's health. This approach leads to staff feeling valued and to stability in the team. As a result, no agency staff are used.

Leaders provide staff with regular, high-quality supervision. Staff are actively encouraged to voice any worries or concerns and participate in reflective discussions about their work. Leaders have a clear understanding of staff's strengths and areas for development. They are proactive in having sensitive conversations when required and in agreeing helpful actions to raise practice.

The home's independent person undertakes monthly Regulation 44 visits; however, their reports have not been sent to Ofsted. This has limited external oversight of the home.

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 registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.</p> <p>The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—</p> <p>HMCI. (Regulation 44 (1) (7)(a))</p>	18 July 2025

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority provides an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. The home should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards,' page 45, paragraph 9.30)

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 Ltd

Registered provider address: Suite 5, 1st Floor Hillcrest House, 51 Woodcote Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 0LT

Responsible individual: Mark Pomell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Jo Mitchell, Social Care Inspector

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