

## Children's homes inspection – Full

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26/09/2016</b>
<b>Unique reference number</b>	<b>1229766</b>
<b>Type of inspection</b>	<b>Full</b>
<b>Provision subtype</b>	<b>Residential special school</b>
<b>Registered provider</b>	<b>The Aurora Group</b>
<b>Registered provider address</b>	<b>Aurora Asd Ltd, 125 London Wall, London EC2Y 5AL</b>

<b>Responsible individual</b>	<b>Louise De-Hayes</b>
<b>Registered manager</b>	<b>Emma Nelson</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>Joanna Heller</b>

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>26/09/2016</b>
<b>Previous inspection judgement</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>

**1229766**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Good-quality care planning means that staff have a clear idea of children's individual needs and are equipped to meet these. As a result, the children receive highly individualised, child-focused care which has a positive impact on their life.
- The children's well-being and progress are central to the service delivered. Although the children's individual progress varies greatly due to their complex care needs, some are making excellent progress and are unrecognisable from the child who first arrived.
- The children are constantly stimulated in an immersive learning environment, promoting their awareness of the world around them. They enjoy opportunities which were not previously open to them.
- The children feel safe and are safe. Their thoughts, wishes and feelings are constantly sought, however complex their needs.
- There is very good partnership working and, as a result, the home is extremely highly thought of by families and partner agencies. This demonstrates that children's well-being is at the centre of the care delivered.
- The children benefit from a well-equipped and spacious building which meets their needs. There are clear plans in place to enhance the accommodation throughout the site.
- The availability of specialist therapeutic services on site means that these are easily accessible and that staff are guided to meet children's complex individual needs.
- This service has recently been registered under new ownership, and is benefiting from improved resources and an enthused staff team. The strong commitment that staff display means that complex individual needs are well met.
- The home is well managed. The manager and provider have a clear overview of the strengths and areas for development in the home, and are together driving improvement effectively. However, the manager has been asked to improve particular aspects of the records maintained at the home.

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

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Ensure that staff understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording, and that information regarding the child is recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child.

In particular, ensure that children's records are well maintained in a clear and accurate manner with information held in the correct file. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

A small, private organisation runs this multidisciplinary home. The majority of placements are up to 52 weeks and are long term. The home provides some short breaks. The other services shared within the grounds of the home are a school and accommodation for young people over 18. Currently registered to provide accommodation for up to 23, the home cares for children with complex support and health needs. These include profound learning difficulties, and sensory and physical impairments. A range of facilities are available on site, including education, outdoor and multi-sensory equipment, and physiotherapy services.

### Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
First inspection under new ownership		

## Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The setting provides long-term residential care and some short breaks for children with learning disabilities and associated complex needs. Parents and professionals say that the levels of support are 'excellent' and that their guidance on how their child should be cared for is fully followed. There have been significant changes in the past year. However, the core staff have worked hard to maintain a stable, secure and happy environment. Social workers say that the ability of staff to provide such highly individualised care means that children flourish. The level of progress made by children is variable, due to their particularly complex needs. However, they each make small but personally significant progress in their communication, independence, behaviour and social skills. For some children, the progress made is exceptional. One parent referred to their child as being 'unrecognisable', stating that they are 'doing things that they never would be able to do at home' and that they 'are seeing a different side of them'.</p> <p>Good-quality pre-admission assessments and care planning guide staff effectively in how to meet individual children's complex needs. However, most important to those children who are often unable to articulate their emotions and anxieties verbally are the relationships that they develop with staff over time. Children develop strong bonds with staff, demonstrated through their non-verbal communication, such as snuggling up for a cuddle. One social worker described how a visually impaired child recognises voices and seeks out staff with whom they have particularly strong relationships.</p> <p>The staff and manager work well in partnership with others, both inside and external to the service, to improve the experiences of the children, on occasion challenging other services to deliver more targeted and appropriate support. Strong partnership working with families promotes contact and ensures, where possible, that they remain key critical figures in their child's day-to-day life. For example, families are able to stay in a cottage on site, either with or without their child.</p> <p>Communication regimes are embedded into the service and each child's individual methods are developed. For one child, this has enabled them to begin to speak their first recognisable words. Inclusion is central to the philosophy of care and staff constantly seek children's thoughts, wishes and feelings through direct discussion and observation of their non-verbal communication. For example, staff have used an imaginative approach to try to understand a child's preferred colour for their bedroom by monitoring their visual responses to colours projected onto a wall.</p>	

Equality and diversity are threaded through the service provided and, however, profound the child's disability, staff ensure that their specific cultural and spiritual needs are catered for. For example, staff have explored a child's culture and interest through reggae music. This has acted as a step to introduce classical music to the child, broadening their experiences.

The children benefit from the effective partnership with on-site education services that ensures that children remain consistently appropriately stimulated. Staff access the school's resources, enabling them to provide an immersive learning environment with a variety of physical and sensory activities. On occasion, the progress that children make regarding their understanding of the world around them has, parents say, challenged them to provide more stimulation in the family home, promoting a circle of positivity where before there had been none. Children enjoy on-site parties and experience fun activities, such as bowling, swimming and trips to the zoo. There is a real sense of joy and fun, with key events such as the summer fete, Halloween and Christmas parties. One family described how everyone is looking forward to their child's birthday this week, with the child saying 'There's gonna be a parrty!!!!' Photographs in personalised events books help children and their families remember and share these memorable moments.

The children benefit from an environment which is suitably adapted and equipped to meet their needs, and any specialist equipment which would benefit them is provided. For example, staff have provided tactile symbols on a visually impaired child's bedroom door so that they can easily identify it. A variety of on-site specialist professionals guide staff and ensure that children maintain optimum health, despite complex health conditions. Staff receive appropriate training and are assessed as competent before undertaking any complex care activities, ensuring that particular care needs and medical conditions, such as epilepsy or tube feeds, are well managed. Professionals refer to 'insightful' staff who provide fantastic care, and who are highly observant and responsive to the smallest change in the child's well-being.

Parents and professionals have absolute confidence in the staff to provide high-quality individualised care. One placing social worker said that the home had provided an 'excellent placement' where their child was 'incredibly happy and very settled'. Comments from parents included how a child has: 'come on in leaps and bounds since he came. To see my son riding around the grounds on the bike specially made for him is amazing. We now have hope, for the first time.'

	Judgement grade
<b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>	<b>Good</b>
The children are helped to feel safe and secure through consistent support and	

routines. Parents and social workers say that they know that their child feels happy and safe through their actions and body language, for example by the way they 'cuddle into the staff'. One parent said: 'He is making this his home. He feels comfortable and happy. He almost doesn't like it when I come, and gets a bit upset when going home.' Parents and professionals have absolute confidence in the staff's ability to keep the children safe effectively.

Comprehensive and regularly reviewed risk assessments and management plans guide staff in how to manage individual risks effectively. In conjunction with appropriate supervision and support arrangements, this has ensured that there have been no significant or safeguarding incidents in the home. Staff receive suitable training and guidance, and are clear about the processes and procedures in place and their duty to safeguard children.

Staff receive suitable training, and their competence to administer medication and deliver complex care tasks is regularly assessed. Arrangements for medication protect children from medication errors effectively. For example, daily medication audits identify any shortfalls or problems swiftly, allowing appropriate action to be taken. When any concerns arise, the manager takes effective action to address these issues in order to improve medication arrangements.

Staff recognise behaviour as an effective means of communication, and seek to ensure that the child's potential needs are met, and as a result no sanctions are used. Staff receive suitable training and are clear on the thresholds for restraint, and as a result it is rarely used. Records of restraint are transparent and generally well documented. However, on occasion, they lack clear detail. Staff work in partnership to identify potential triggers to any antisocial behaviours. The effective management strategies developed are shared among staff and documented in each child's individual behaviour support plan. One social worker said how staff have successfully 'helped [name of child] to move from a challenging child to a quite settled one who is doing very well'.

Recruitment procedures are robust, protecting children from unsuitable people gaining employment in the home. For example, no staff commence work at the home until checks on their suitability have been verified.

Effective on-site auditing and management arrangements ensure that the premises are safe. Improved security arrangements at the perimeter and staff's vigilance are enhancing the security of this large site. Fire prevention arrangements are well managed to reduce the risk of fire, and staff are clear on how to evacuate individual children effectively in the event of an emergency. Suitable measures are in place to promote good hygiene and infection control, reducing the risk of cross-infection.

One child's parents described how the caring nature of staff had given them absolute confidence in the service. They said, 'Before he came, we thought that we



would never be able to leave him out of sight. Who would be able to care for him like we could? But 24 hours a day, they do better. It's been the answer to our prayers.'

	Judgement grade
<b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>	<b>Good</b>
<p>The suitably qualified and experienced registered manager has worked at the home for a number of years. She has provided consistent, good-quality leadership, steering the home effectively through a change of ownership. During this period of uncertainty, she has ensured that staff continue to provide good-quality, individualised, child-focused care.</p> <p>The home is well resourced, and services provided are in accordance with the home's statement of purpose. All children are able to access a wealth of specialist support services and facilities such as physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, and speech and language therapy. Staffing levels are high and meet the individually assessed needs of each child. Regular agency staff are frequently used. However, recruitment to vacant posts means that their use is being reduced, and there are clear boundaries to the activities that they undertake.</p> <p>There is an effective senior team to support the manager and ensure the effective operation of the setting in the manager's absence. Staff feel that they are well supported by a committed manager who has high expectations of staff. Children's needs are prioritised effectively and, as a result, children progress and the home makes a real difference for them and their families.</p> <p>The staff benefit from a comprehensive induction and suitable supervision arrangements which help to promote their skills and confidence. Qualified nurses and therapists receive appropriate clinical supervision, enhancing their ability to reflect on their practice. Staff receive regular specialist training to ensure that they are able to meet children's complex needs. Training and professional development are monitored by the training manager to ensure that staff's knowledge and skills are regularly updated, in line with changes in children's needs or legislation. For example, training on the Mental Capacity Act and deprivation of liberty is scheduled. Staff therefore benefit from a good selection of relevant training which promotes their competence and professional development. All staff who have been working with children in a children's home for over two years have completed their level 3 diploma, and all remaining staff have been enrolled.</p> <p>Staff are operating at an enhanced level and are confident to challenge other services that, in their opinion, are not understanding the child's needs and delivering the right care effectively. For example, one social worker described how</p>	

staff correctly challenged health professionals who, they felt, were not advocating the right course of treatment for a sick child. Parents and professionals really value the level of care that their child receives, consistently using terms such as 'fantastic and excellent'. Professionals refer to 'insightful' staff who are caring and individually motivated to deliver a very good service to the children.

Recording systems within the home are generally sound. However, on specific occasions, suitably detailed records are not always maintained. For example, staff have not always signed particular care plans, omitted information such as the child's date of birth or not accurately recorded a restraint. On one occasion, information was held on the wrong child's file. While this has no direct impact on children, it is essential that children's records are maintained to a good standard to ensure that their care needs can be consistently effectively met.

Significant incidents are rare and, where accidents or incidents occur, these are well managed, and the information is shared with parents and appropriate professionals.

One complaint has been received, which was appropriately managed with an open and transparent response. Parents feel valued by the service. One said: 'They are on the ball. You know that you're not going to be ignored or fobbed off.'

The effective quality assurance arrangements in place enable the manager and provider to have a strong sense of the strengths and areas for development in the service. The home's management team is enthused by the new ownership and improved investment in the home. Managers have high aspirations and a plan of how to achieve these in practice. A placing social worker said, 'It's been a very good placement and they are meeting her needs incredibly well.' Another said, 'It's been a blessing.' Parents are highly complementary regarding the care, and one said, 'I can see him flying, if they do more of what they have been. There's been really giant leaps for him; I still cry about it.'

## What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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